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County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 974-1101
http://ceo.lacounty.gov

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

May 7, 2014

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERN PROGRAM
(RESPONSE TO ITEM 2, AGENDA OF JANUARY 7, 2014)

On January 7, 2014, on motion by Supervisors Antonovich and Molina, your Board directed all Department Heads to identify and fill at least one budgeted, vacant position that may be practically filled with a Career Development Intern within the current 2013-14 Fiscal Year; directed the Chief Executive Officer to provide funding and budget authority to each County Department that currently has no budgeted Career Development Intern positions in the 2014-15 Fiscal Year Budget; and the Director of Personnel, in consultation with the Director of Children and Family Services, to produce and distribute guidelines for departments to use in order to orient and train incoming Career Development Interns who are entering the workplace, and report back within 120 days.

Background

Over the past 20 years, your Board has identified the development of career opportunities for transition-age youth exiting the County foster care system as a critical issue. One such program designed to assist at-risk youth is the Career Development Intern Program. The Career Development Intern Program provides structured on-the-job training and employment for transition age youth, and provides them the opportunity and skills to successfully transition to full-time employment at the County of Los Angeles in a broad range of entry-level positions.

Career Development Intern Hiring

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) identified qualified candidates for Career Development Interns, provided assistance for intern candidates in preparation for selection interviews, and developed a selection interview session where Career Development Intern candidates and department hiring managers conducted selection interviews within one day. DHR consulted with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Internal Services Department (ISD) to discuss best practices in orienting and training incoming Career Development Interns who are entering the workplace. DCFS provided DHR staff with detailed and tested guidelines to assist at-risk youth, which include roles and responsibilities, employee benefits, workplace orientation, and work and life skills training. In addition, DHR surveyed and met with all County department representatives to assist in identifying positions available to hire at least one Career Development Intern in the 2013-14 and/or 2014-15 Fiscal Years.

As of May 1, 2014, 14 intern candidates have accepted job offers as a result of this process. Other qualified candidates have been invited to interview directly with departments. DHR continues to run examinations for Career Development Interns, and additional applicants will join the qualified list within the month. Newly qualified intern candidates will participate in preparation sessions and the selection interview process in order for departments to meet their obligation to hire a minimum of one intern prior to June 30, 2014.

2014-15 Fiscal Year Adopted Budget

In response to the Board motion to direct the Chief Executive Officer to provide funding and budget authority to each County Department that currently has no budgeted Career Development Intern positions in the 2014-15 Fiscal Year Budget, the Chief Executive Office required in its 2014-15 Fiscal Year Final Changes instructions that all departments add at least one ordinance and budgeted Career Development Intern position for the 2014-15 Fiscal Year Adopted Budget.

Departments were instructed to convert a budgeted, vacant and ordinance position to a Career Development Intern position and encouraged to participate with DHR in the effort to hire on these positions.

The 2014-15 Fiscal Year Final Changes Budget requests from departments are due to the CEO on May 7, 2014, and the CEO will work with departments to ensure compliance with the Board's directive.

Career Development Intern Program Guidelines

The Career Development Intern Program Guidelines are attached. Departments reviewed and commented on the proposed guidelines to ensure the success of the Career Development Intern Program. Final guidelines will be distributed to County departments at the Departmental Training meeting scheduled for May 22, 2014. The guidelines will assist departments as they hire, orient, and develop their Career Development Interns to become trained and successful, permanent County employees.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 974-1101 or your staff may contact Lisa M. Garrett, Director of Personnel, at (213) 974-2406 or lgarrett@hr.lacounty.gov.

WTF:LMG

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors

Department Guidelines and Procedures

Department of
Human Resources
Lisa M. Garrett, Director
500 W. Temple Street
Room 555
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.893.7810

Effective May 6, 2014

Career Development Intern Program

Contents

Overview

History

For over twenty years, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) has charged County departments to provide employment opportunities for youth, especially emancipated foster youth, and provide them with valuable work experience so that they may become the next generation of career County employees.

While some County departments have ready-made employment opportunities for emancipated foster youth, others found training opportunities difficult to identify. The Department of Children and Family Services, and the Internal Services Department have developed a number of guidelines and processes that facilitate career opportunities and growth for emancipated foster youth and other at-risk youth. Their work and successes with Career Development Interns have been instrumental in developing these guidelines.

On January 7, 2014, on recommendation as submitted by Supervisors Antonovich and Molina, the Board directed all Department Heads to identify and fill at least one budgeted, vacant position that may be practicably filled with a Career Development Intern; and directed the Director of Personnel, in consultation with the Director of Children and Family Services, to produce and distribute guidelines for departments to use in order to orient and train incoming Career Development Interns who are entering the workplace.

Mission

The mission of the Countywide Career Development Intern Program is to expose youth to career opportunities within the County of Los Angeles, and assist them in gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to compete for full-time budgeted positions.

Career Development Interns are hired to assist experienced journey-level workers in a variety of training assignments of typically 12 to 24 months varying in duration based on individual training requirements, and department financial capabilities. At the conclusion of the assignment, the intern should be able to qualify for a permanent County position.

Objectives

By the conclusion of the internship, the department will have a motivated, trained, and qualified employee capable of obtaining an entry-level position within the department.

Career Development Interns will grow into a future with the County of Los Angeles as employed, engaged, and contributing citizens. During the course of the internship, interns will launch their County careers. Additionally, the intern will be provided life skills training and tools in order to be productive and fiscally responsible members of the community.

Who are Career Development Interns?

- They are emancipated foster youth who are at least 18 years old.

- They have currently enrolled in, completed, or have current or past eligibility for the Department of Children and Family Services' and Probation Department's Independent Living Program, or current enrollment in the Department of Public Works' and Probation Department's Youth Opportunity Program.

- They have individual life, education, and employment experiences. Some have worked for a few years; others have never had a job. Some are quiet; others are extroverted. Each intern has skills and gifts unique to herself or himself.

- They receive a structured 12 to 24 month on-the-job training assignment in preparation for successful progression into a specific occupational field. Interns can be part-time or full-time. If the intern works part-time, the assignment is pro-rated to assure the intern has full exposure to the training available, but not to exceed 24 months.

- They receive technical job training in office support/clerical work, informational technology support, skilled crafts support, or operational support.

- They receive guidance/mentoring on workplace behaviors and competencies, individual responsibilities, and development of occupational skill sets. During training, interns are expected to develop and progressively increase skills and independence as they gain experience and proficiency in their occupation.

- At the conclusion of the internship, Career Development Interns will be able to apply for a permanent position in the County.

Fiscal Impact on Departments

Funding

Participating County departments will hire and train Career Development Interns. Should a department not have a Career Development Intern classification in its budget, the department will complete an Ordinance Position Authority form (see Appendices) and forward to the Chief Executive Office for approval. Departments hiring Career Development Interns will enter them into the personnel system as "M items - Monthly Temporary Training" employees. The "M" class allows temporary employees to receive benefits.

Length of Internship

The Career Development Internships can last from 12 to 24 months. The difference in time is up to the department and its needs. Variables include position funding, whether the assignment is full-time or part-time, and the amount of time required for the intern to complete training and be ready for placement in a permanent position.

Costs

The department will incur some costs in the development and training of Career Development Interns beyond the customary orientation and induction costs. These include – if the department elects, and resources and space allows – additional coaching, coordination and costs associated with the intern's participation in Department of Children and Family Services and Internal Services Department structured training courses. Please contact the Program Manager in Internal Services at (562) 940-2999 or the Volunteer Internship Manager in Department of Children and Family Services at (562) 345-6633 if you wish to receive additional information.

Please note that there is a reference to Note 40 with Item No. 8250 Career Development Intern, which grants the Career Development Intern a 5.5% increase above the compensation provided for in Section 6.28.050 of this Code after 12 months, if their performance is rated as "Competent" or higher.

Career Development Intern Program Structure

Roles and Responsibilities

The Department

Each department will identify and provide a specified number of budgeted classifications to be used as training slots. Additionally, the department needs to determine the length of internship, – 12 versus 24 months, based upon department needs – establish its benchmarks for interns to ensure a successful transition to permanent employment, provide a listing of on-the-job instructions and work activities to be completed, and establish the performance level needed for each activity in order to advance.

Prior to hiring an intern, the department will complete the Hiring and Status Reporting Form (see Appendix B), and if the department does not have a Career Development Intern classification in its budget, the department needs to complete an Ordinance Position Authority form (see Appendix A), and forward to the Chief Executive Office.

Each department will need to assign a Career Intern Program Coordinator to track the intern's progress, collect performance assessment forms, and provide orientation – as part of the regular orientation process – as to the specifics of the Career Development Intern Program within the department.

A journey-level supervisor, capable of providing training, and demonstrating the support, patience, and empathy to work with emancipated youth is a critical role in ensuring the success of an intern. Interns should also be paired with an on-the-job coach who will serve as a guide and a resource for the Career Development Intern and assist in the areas of character building, work ethic, customer service and various other career enrichment qualities. The supervisor provides periodic appraisals assessing performance in departmental assignments (see Appendix E). Departments with a few interns may assign the coordinator and coach roles to the interns' supervisors for efficiency's sake.

While on-the-job skills-building classroom trainings are fundamental components of the Career Development Intern Program, frequent reviews and coaching are key factors, as well. It is recommended that interns receive training in a variety of areas including work place etiquette, business ethics, conflict resolution and resume writing, or the department may contact the Program Manager in Internal Services at (562) 940-2999 or the Volunteer Internship Manager in Children and Family Services at (562) 345-6633 for additional information.

Department of Human Resources

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) will coordinate guidelines, training and other reference materials for departments to use in order to orient and train incoming Career Development Interns. DHR will administer open continuous Countywide examinations.

DHR will also provide a Countywide coordinator to manage the Career Development Intern Program. Questions regarding the Career Development Intern Program may be forwarded to DHR Executive Services at (213) 893-7810.

Coaches

The intern's coach is a volunteer from within the hiring department who is interested in supporting and providing individual coaching to interns. The coach has a professional, mentoring relationship with the intern assigned to her or to him. Please refer to Appendices F and G for specific responsibilities and an optional Career Development Program Coach Application.

The coach will meet with the intern on a regular basis to discuss his or her job performance, interests, abilities, limitations, needs and assistance in establishing goals and objectives. The coach communicates in an open and honest manner with the intern, respectful of the intern's confidentiality, and helps the intern avoid compromising situations. In providing professional guidance to the intern, the coach assists in assuring that the intern observes all safety rules and regulations.

During periodic meetings with the intern, the coach will check in with the intern to ensure that she or he enrolls in the suggested courses of related instruction as required.

The coach will meet with the departmental Career Development Intern Program Coordinator on a regularly scheduled basis to discuss the Intern's progress, and assure that all relevant training is provided.

Interns

Interns will be assigned work shifts, including evenings, nights or weekends, sometimes at various work locations. Employees are required to be at their work areas and ready to work at their designated start time.

In order to provide quality customer service to the public and other County departments, interns will conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and efficient manner at all times. They should interact appropriately with their co-workers and the public, and present a proper positive image.

The department should provide Career Development Interns classroom and on-the-job training on related subject matter in his or her craft or job field, such as keyboarding skills, computer software, safe use of hand and power tools, mathematical refresher courses, and reading comprehension. Interns should be encouraged to take classes required to qualify for various exams and apprenticeship tests for their particular specialty. On a monthly basis, interns should be encouraged to engage with their coach and their supervisor for mentoring and performance feedback.

Career Development Intern Progress

Employee Orientation

Career Development Interns will receive the same comprehensive employee orientation as all new employees – including discussion of department-specific policies. As many of the interns are new or recent arrivals to the workplace, it is recommended to take additional time in covering conduct and performance expectations in depth. Some of these expectations may be new or unfamiliar to the intern, and the difference between workplace behavior and non-workplace behavior could be a new concept for her or for him.

Orientation for the Career Development Intern lasts beyond one or two meetings. The intern's supervisor, manager, coach, and departmental Career Development Intern Program Coordinator should meet with the intern to follow through on information presented, discover areas where additional help in adapting to the new position is necessary, and reinforce learning to work in a professional, customer-centric environment. Appendices H, I, and K refer to workplace policies, performance expectations, and office practices, and can serve as resources when orienting the intern.

A checklist of areas to cover with the new intern should include:

- Departmental Organizational Structure
- Departmental Policies and Procedures
- Dress Code Policy
- Customer Service Standards
- Confidentiality Policy
- County Benefits
- Timecard Policies and Procedures

- Pay Days
- Work Hours
- Departmental Overtime Policy
- Time-Off Requests Policy
- Training Schedule
- Employee Safety Guidelines
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Policy of Equity
- Countywide Discipline Guidelines
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Workplace Violence/Threat Management Policy
- Employee Safety Guidelines
- Nepotism Policy
- Cellular Phone Policy
- County Identification Cards
- New Employee Guide to Workers' Compensation
- Return to Work Program
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Reasonable Accommodations and the Interactive Process
- Family School Partnership Act

As part of the Career Development Internship, the new intern will be eligible for select County employee benefits including vacation, sick pay, health and dental insurance, and participation in the Pension Savings Plan. Interns are "M" item employees, temporary employees in training paid on a monthly basis, and are eligible under Title 5 of the County Code to participate in its benefits plans. The department should assist the intern in enrolling in an appropriate plan, and should follow up with the intern during Life Skills training on using benefits correctly. Questions regarding benefits for Career Development Interns can be answered by DHR Employee Benefits at (213) 388-9982.

Employee Training and Development

Life Skills

In addition to establishing formal skills training for the interns, it is recommended that a component of Life Skills training be included. Please note that not all Interns will require this component of training. Many are young adults who already possess some of these skills.

However, for those that may need additional support, such training will assist in ensuring the success of the intern's employment experience and transition to permanent status. The Department of Children and Family Services has shared many resources that they have developed on these subjects. Please refer to the appendices for these resources.

The Departments of Children and Family Services and Internal Services schedule classes for Career Development Interns working for them regarding these life skills. As classes are scheduled, the departmental Career Development Intern Program Coordinator should establish a working relationship with the Volunteer Internship Manager at the Department of Children and Family Services (562) 345-6633, or the Program Manager at Internal Services Division at (562) 940-2999, in order to check availability of these classes and whether the classes can take interns from other departments. If these are not available, the reference guides and presentations found in the appendices will be useful reference for department personnel, as well at the County's Learning Net, learningnet.lacounty.gov.

Examination Preparation

Before the end of the internship period, the Career Development Intern must successfully pass the relevant examination for a promotional position in order to become a permanent County employee. The Department of Human Resources has eight Information Guides on their website that may be used for training purposes. Hard copies of these are attached in Appendices J through Q. A department may access them by the following method:

- Visit http://hr.lacounty.gov.
- Click on the Job Search link.
- Go to Job Information Center.
- Go to Employment Test Preparation System.
- Click on Printable Hard-Copy Versions.

Departments may utilize Information Guides best suited to train their Career Development Intern.

In addition to the Information Guides, by following the above steps departments may also access Practice Tests that may be used for training purposes. The following six tests may be downloaded and printed out:

- Basic Arithmetic
- Clerical
- Data Interpretation Level 1

- Data Interpretation Level 2
- Reading Comprehension
- Written Expression

The intern, his or her supervisor, his or her coach, and the departmental Career Development Intern Program Coordinator will work as a unit in order for the intern to have the best preparation for promotion and a permanent County position. The experience and training over the internship period will help make the intern's experience successful and satisfying.

Acknowledgments

The Department of Children and Family Services and Internal Services Department have established track records in working with and assisting emancipated youth as they begin their careers. These guidelines are a reflection of their work and their dedication to the youth in the County of Los Angeles. The appendices attached here include program resources which they have graciously shared for all departments. A special thank you to Ms. Sheryl Carter Negash of the Department of Children and Family Services, who has developed a number of life skills presentations for interns working within DCFS. Hard copies of these may be found in Appendices R through U.

Appendices

Appendix A

ORDINANCE POSITION AUTHORITY FORM

Tracking #__________

Instructions: Departments to complete numbers 1 through 6 and submit to the CEO Class & Comp Administration

Step 1: Contact Information

Department: Click here to enter text.
Requested by (name): Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter text.
Phone: Click here to enter text.

Step 2: Requested Action

Please indicate the nature of the requested transaction by checking all that apply. Budget approval is required for options B, C, D, and possibly E, depending on the nature of the request.

☐A. Authority to fill budgeted positions at an equal or lower level which fall outside the series*	☐B. Authority to overfill (fill position higher than budgeted)	☐C. Authority for additional ordinance only position through end of fiscal year
☐D. Authority to fill ordinance only position	☐E. Other	

Step 3: Employee/Position Detail:

Division Click here to enter t	Employee Name Click here to ente	Employee Number Click he
Item # and Sub Click here	Payroll Title Click here	
Budgeted Position Information	**From**	**To**
Budgeted Unit Code	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Budget Unit Description	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Budget Item #/Sub	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Item Description (Title)	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Position ID#	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

Step 4: Justification. This is a temporary action, so please include circumstances leading to the request, length of time needed, and long term solution/corrective action (e.g. position requested in next phase of the budget). **Attach additional sheets as needed.**

Step 5: Required Documents. Please check to indicate that these documents <u>are</u> included for all requested actions:

☐ Duty Statement ☐Organization Chart

Step 6: Reviewed by (REQUIRED):

Administrative Deputy ______________________________ Date ______________

*Signature confirms there is no existing eligible list for the position being filled and all HR policies and procedures were adhered to.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE USE ONLY:

Approved ☐ **Denied** ☐

Reason for CEO decision

CEO Manager Approval:

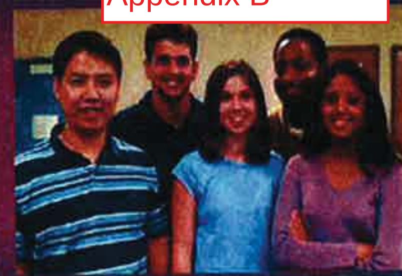
Class/Comp Administration ______________________________ Date ______________

Budget ______________________________ Date ______________

Appendix B

Countywide

Career Development



DEPARTMENTAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERN HIRING & STATUS REPORTING FORM

Please return completed form to the Department of Human Resources
500 W. Temple Street, Room 555, Los Angeles, CA 90012.
Attn: Career Development Intern Program
or fax to (213) 613-4773. Please refer questions to (213)893-7810.

CDIP Coordinator's Name:	**CDIP Coordinator's Phone:** **E-mail:**

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERN INFORMATION

Name:	**Employee Number:**
Department: **Date of Hire:** **Projected Internship End Date:**	**CDI Specialty:** ☐ 8250A - Office Support/Clerical ☐ 8250B - Information Technology/Technical Support ☐ 8250C - Craft Support ☐ 8250D - Heavy Maintenance and Operational Support
Intern's Home Address:	**Supervisorial District:** ☐ Gloria Molina, 1st District ☐ Mark Ridley-Thomas, 2nd District ☐ Zev Yaroslavsky, 3rd District ☐ Don Knabe, 4th District ☐ Michael D. Antonovich, 5th District ☐ Outside of Los Angeles County

ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

Work Location:	**Work Schedule:** **Work Phone:**
Name of Supervisor:	**Supervisor's Phone:**

STATUS CHANGE INFORMATION

☐ **CDI on Permanent Item**	**Date of Permanent Appointment:** **Permanent Item Number & Job Title:** **Department Name:**
☐ **Voluntary Discontinuation of Internship**	**Date of Discontinuation:**
☐ **CDI Released**	**Date of Release:**

Signature: ______________________________ **Date:** ______________

The departmental Human Resources Manager's signature is required for all status change information.

Career Development Intern Program
Competencies

Work Skills
By the conclusion of the internship, CDI's will be able to:
- Consistently type at a speed of at least 45 words per minute; 60 words per minute is preferred.
- Prepare properly formatted documents using Microsoft Word.
- Effectively file documents alphabetically, numerically and chronologically.
- Provide outstanding customer service.
- Prepare complex presentations, charts and graphs utilizing PowerPoint.
- Compile spreadsheet reports utilizing Excel.
- Communicate effectively and appropriately using e-mail.
- Manage an inventory of office supplies and other materials.
- Skillfully navigate the Internet.

Life Skills
By the conclusion of the internship, CDIs will be able to:
- Prepare a personal budget and operate within the parameters of that budget.
- Manage a monthly cash flow.
- Consistently save money.
- Secure and maintain long-term living arrangements.
- Plan and prepare a basic meal.
- Prepare a personal plan for wellness.
- Identify a workplace appropriate wardrobe.
- Identify effective methods for conflict resolution.

Career Planning Skills
By the conclusion of the internship, CDIs will be able to:
- Conduct an assessment of their personal skills, abilities, aptitudes and interests.
- Conduct an organized job search.
- Skillfully complete employment applications.
- Prepare three (3) personal resumes and a cover letter.
- Confidently participate in job interviews.
- Identify a personal career ladder.

Personal Growth Goals
By the conclusion of the internship, CDIs will be able to:

(CDIs choose and develop this section)

Appendix D

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERN PROGRAM AGREEMENT

I, ______________________________, agree to participate in the Career Development Program (CDIP).

I understand that the CDIP is a temporary, up to twenty-four months internship and that the Department (NAME) provides no commitment to permanent employment at the end of the program.

I understand that by accepting the position of a CDIP participant, I am committing myself to fully participate in approximately one year of on-the-job training/experience and homework assignments.

I understand continuing in this program after one year requires satisfactory performance assessments.

I understand that three or more unexcused absences, excessive absences and/or excessive tardiness may result in my immediate release from the program.

I understand that I will receive weekly mentoring and coaching in addition to monthly performance assessments with my supervisor and the Career Development Intern staff.

I understand that I must follow the Career Development Intern Rules of Conduct and Guidelines. If I am unable to consistently comply with these rules and guidelines, the Career Development Intern Program Manager will release me from the program.

I agree to follow and observe all safety rules and regulations of the Department and other agencies regulating the duties that are required as part of my job assignment and as a Career Development Intern.

I understand that if I am terminated or if I resign, that I must return all identification badges. Furthermore, I understand that failure to return the County-issued property may result in the withholding of my final paycheck.

Finally, I understand that the Career Development Internship does not prohibit me from participating in County examinations for permanent positions according to all applicable Civil Service Rules. However, participants should provide at least two weeks advanced notice if they plan to leave the program prior to the end of the one year program.

My signature below indicates that I have read, fully understand and agree to comply with the guidelines rules and regulations outlined in this manual and with all other rules, regulations and procedures related to employment with the (Name of Department) and with the County of Los Angeles.

CDI Name: (Print)	CDI Name: (Signature)
Manager:	Date:

Appendix E

Career Development Intern Program
Monthly Performance Assessment

Employee Name:	Employee No.
Job Title: Career Development Intern	
Department:	
Supervisor:	
Assessment Period:	

Ratings

(1) = Poor (2) = Fair (3) = Satisfactory (4) = Good (5) = Excellent

Attendance/Punctuality _____
Comments:

Job Knowledge _____
Comments:

Completion of Tests _____
Comments:

Appropriate Dress _____
Comments:

Compliance with Instructions _____
Comments:

Gets Along with Others _____
Comments:

Overall Rating (average the rating numbers above): _________

Additional Competencies Mastered:

Verification of Review

By signing this form, you confirm that you have discussed this review in detail with your coordinator and/or training supervisor. Signing this form does not necessarily indicate that you agree with this evaluation.

Employee Signature Date

Supervisor Signature Date

Career Development Intern Program
"Coach" Responsibilities

Coaches are volunteers from within (Department) ranks who are interested in supporting CDIs by providing knowledge, tips, employment advice and encouragement. Coaches are a critical component of the CDIP as they serve as an added support – an aide that is vital to the on-the-job training experience. Coaching activities include the following:

- Meeting face-to-face or speaking by telephone on a weekly basis to discuss job performance, interests, abilities, challenges and needs. Coaches provide assistance with established short and long-term employment goals, objectives and competencies.
- Providing a confidential and "safe space" to talk and share experiences that relate to and could impact job performance.
- Assisting in advising CDIs of appropriate work place behavior, and counseling on how to navigate the Department's culture. Coaches work closely with the supervisors and coordinators of the program.
- Monthly conferencing face-to-face or by telephone with the Departmental CDI Program Manager to discuss progress, challenges and successes.
- Assisting CDIs with mastery of Personal Growth Goals that lead to "self-actualization."

Desirable Characteristics for "Coaches"

In a recent survey/discussion, current CDIs indicated that the following characteristics are desirable in a Coach:

1) Former foster youth status – ability to relate to their life experiences.
2) Similar personal characteristics/life status – age, race, gender, marital status, parenthood status, etc.
3) Availability.
4) Ability to tactfully/sensitively inform others when they are wrong.
5) Trustworthiness.
6) Good sense of humor.
7) Good example.
8) Confidentiality.

The CDI's believe that these factors are important, as well:

- The Coach does not have to hold a particular position or job title.
- The Coach does not have to work in the same office as the CDI.
- CDIs should have a say in selecting their own coaches.

What Being A Coach for the CDIP is not:

1) A Supervisor: the Coach may consult with the supervisor and reinforce supervisory expectations, but the Coach will not serve as the supervisor.
2) A Surrogate Parent: CDIs are young adults, not children. They may need sound advice, but Coaches should not parent these employees.
3) A Defender: CDIs are encouraged to practice personal responsibility and to accept accountability for their actions. Coaches must encourage them to do the right thing, not justify or dismiss failure to do this.
4) A Bank Account: Coaches should not loan or give money to CDIs. They should give the CDIs advice about managing their own finances.
5) A Part-Time Participant: Coaches should be willing to provide support and guidance to CDIs for the entire 24 month internship and possibly beyond, into their first six months of County employment after completion of the internship.

Appendix G

Career Development Intern Program
Coach Application

(Please print)
Name: ______________________________
Classification: ______________________________
Work Location: ______________________________

How long have you held your current position with (Department)? ______________

What are your strengths as an employee? ______________________________

What ratings did you receive on your last three (3) performance evaluations?
____

What life goals are you pursuing? ______________________________
____

Why do you want to become a coach? ______________________________
____

List some characteristics that you possess that would enable you to be a positive role model.
____
____

Describe any special knowledge, skills, talents that you can share with your intern.
____
____

Describe any previous experience you have had working with young adults.
____
____

Are you willing to make the personal commitment to serve as a coach for up to two (2) years?
Yes _____ No _____

For whom are you willing to serve as a coach? (Check all that apply)

_____ Male

_____ Female

_____ 18-20 years old

_____ 21 – 24 years old

_____ 25 years and older

Please write any additional comments you feel will explain your interest in serving as a Coach. Be aware that these comments may be shared with your intern.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this application. Please return to:

(Name of CDIP manager, title, address)

Policies

Policies are designed to provide you with the kind of work environment that you have the right to expect under the law. It is important to understand both your rights and your responsibilities under Countywide and departmental policies. You will receive departmental policies from your department. This section is not meant to be all-inclusive; it contains only some of the Countywide policies.

- Employee Health and Safety
- Workplace Violence Policy
- Drug Free Workplace Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Non-Discrimination Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- ADA Compliance Program
- Diversity Policy / Cultural Awareness
- Filing Complaints on Policy Issues

Employee Health and Safety

As your employer, the County is concerned with your health and safety. As a County employee, your health and safety in the workplace is protected by Federal, State and County regulations and policies. The policies discussed here apply to all County employees, but your department may have additional safety regulations specific to your department, job, or work area.

The State of California administers its own workplace safety and health program, called Cal/OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act), which is designed to protect employee's safety while on the job.

Protecting your health and safety on the job and complying with safety regulations is a two-part responsibility. The County, as your employer, has some responsibilities, and you, as an employee, have some responsibilities. The goal is that everyone works together to maintain a safe workplace.

The County's policies, which comply with Cal/OSHA requirements for employers, set out its responsibilities:

- Maintain a workplace that is safe and healthful for the employees.
- Comply with workplace health and safety standards, provide an Injury and Illness Prevention Program and records, and do not discriminate against employees who report hazardous working conditions.
- Require each department in the County to have its own Injury and Illness Prevention Program and to train employees on its provisions.

Employers must also provide employees with training in general safe work practices and specific training concerning hazards unique to any job assignment.

As an employee, you have a part to play to help maintain a healthy and safe work environment as well. Your responsibilities under the law require that you:

- Obey all workplace safety and health laws, standards, orders, and regulations.
- Use protective equipment, safety devices, methods or processes intended for employee protection.
- Do not interfere with the use of safeguards by others.
- Do not remove, displace, damage, destroy or tamper with safety devices, safeguards, notices or warnings.

Resolving Health and Safety Concerns

If you see an unsafe condition or a problem, you should immediately alert your supervisor or the Departmental Safety Officer and provide as much information as possible.

Workplace Violence Policy

The County is committed to doing everything reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety, and health of its employees. To enhance the security of our work environment, you must wear your County Identification Card whenever you are on County property. The County has a zero tolerance policy on threats or violence in the workplace. Workplace threats, intimidation and violence are expressly prohibited and could result in termination or other disciplinary action.

How to Report Violence or a Threat

If you are threatened or witness a threat and you believe there is immediate danger, call 911 to get emergency assistance. If you do not feel there is immediate danger, notify your supervisor or manager, who will report the incident to the departmental personnel/human resources office and the Office of Security Management.

The County's Office of Security Management is staffed by Sheriff's Department personnel. They review reported security incidents and consult with departments on handling problems and preventing escalation of reported incidents.

If you are confronted by someone who has become violent or is behaving in a threatening manner, follow these tips:

- Don't be a hero.
- Don't confront anyone who has brought a weapon to work.
- Don't try to negotiate with a violent person.
- Call 911 immediately.

Consequences of Violating the Workplace Violence Policy

Threats of harm are illegal, and anyone who makes a threat in the workplace may be subject to arrest and prosecution. An employee who makes a threat and is deemed to be a possible danger may be removed from the workplace while an investigation is conducted. Depending on the circumstances, the employee may be temporarily transferred to another worksite or suspended.

When it has been determined that a threat or act of violence has been committed, the employee is subject to departmental discipline, up to and including discharge.

If you have questions regarding this policy, talk with your supervisor or your departmental personnel/human resources office.

Drug Free Workplace Policy

The County has a dual responsibility – provide a safe, healthful workplace for its employees and protect the safety and health of the public. So, a County employee under the influence of illegal drugs creates a potentially dangerous situation not just for other County employees but for the public as well.

To help prevent such a situation from occurring, the County established a Drug Free Workplace Policy. The policy states that:

- The abuse of drugs, including alcohol, by employees or contract personnel is unacceptable because it adversely affects health, safety, security and productivity as well as public confidence and trust.
- Using, possessing, selling or being under the influence of illegal drugs is unlawful, dangerous and is absolutely prohibited at the workplace.
- The use of alcohol at the workplace or the misuse of alcohol or prescribed drugs to any extent that impairs safe and effective job performance is also prohibited.
- Violation of any element of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

For more information about this policy, or for assistance with a substance abuse problem, contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), (213) 738-4200 Monday-Friday 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Non-Discrimination Policy

County policy, State and Federal laws have established that no one shall be discriminated against or harassed in employment because of:

> Race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sex or sexual orientation.

If you have questions, please contact your supervisor, your departmental Affirmative Action Coordinator, or the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by County government. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of an individual's employment,
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual,
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Any County employee found to have sexually harassed another employee will receive disciplinary action to stop the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and prevent any retaliation. Disciplinary action can range from a verbal warning to termination on the first offense.

If you have questions regarding this policy, contact your supervisor, your departmental Affirmative Action Coordinator, or the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

ADA Compliance Program

This program assures that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). The County's ADA Compliance Program states that:

> *The County of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission and access to its services, programs or activities. This policy applies equally to employees of the County of Los Angeles and members of the general public who access public services through County departments and related agencies.*

If you have questions regarding this program, contact your supervisor, your departmental ADA Coordinator, or the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

Diversity Policy/Cultural Awareness

Because it supports an inclusive, diverse workplace and cultural awareness, the County established a Diversity Policy, which states that:

> *It is the policy of Los Angeles County to create an inclusive workplace environment in which each person is valued for his/her unique gifts and talents; to capitalize on the innovation inherent in diverse work groups; and to assure that each person is valued based on individual characteristics rather than on stereotypes.*

A key goal of this policy is to conduct employee training for the purpose of instructing participants to respect others and be open to their individual experiences; generating an awareness of other's personal perceptions by imparting knowledge of cultural characteristics; and teaching skills to apply cultural concepts in everyday working behaviors.

If you have questions regarding this policy, contact your supervisor, your departmental Diversity Coordinator, or the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

Filing Complaints on Policy Issues

If you wish to file a complaint or discuss discrimination, sexual harassment, or other forms of harassment based upon any part of the EEO Non-Discrimination Policy, the Sexual Harassment Policy, the ADA Compliance Program, or the Diversity Policy or retaliation by management or co-workers, contact any of the following:

- Your immediate supervisor
- A higher level manager
- Your departmental Affirmative Action Coordinator
- Your departmental ADA Coordinator
- Your departmental personnel/human resources office
- The Office of Affirmative Action Compliance
- The State Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) or U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Summary

Our County policies and procedures are established to create and maintain a positive work environment. When policy violations occur, supervisors and managers are obligated to review all incidents and recommend appropriate corrective action. Such recommendations may include disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Appendix I

Performance Expectations

You are a County of Los Angeles employee. You are a part of an organization that is vital to the safety and well-being of millions of people. Your actions on and off the job reflect upon the County government. After all, you are not just a County government employee, you ARE the County government in the eyes of the public.

By agreeing to work for the County, you accept the responsibility of upholding the public trust – the confidence that millions of residents have that you will put their interests above your own and not try to profit unfairly from the position you enjoy.

This means having enough pride, integrity, and respect in yourself to hold yourself to a high standard of personal ethics. This section will help you understand these expectations and how you can meet or exceed them, including:

- Probation
- Customer Service Principles
- Confidentiality
- Professional Appearance
- Telephone Procedures
- Performance Evaluation System
- Outside Employment
- Attendance/Tardiness
- Requesting Leave Time
- Conflict of Interest
- Ethical and Moral Standards
- Use of County Property
- Political Activity
- Reporting Fraud

Probation

You must serve a probationary period when you are first hired and each time you are promoted to a higher level position. You do not become a permanent employee until you have successfully completed your first probation. To manage your performance and make the best of your probationary period, get a clear understanding of what is expected of you from your supervisor.

The probationary period is the time to show your department that they made the right decision. You must show that you can perform the duties of the job without a need for close supervision and monitoring.

You must take the initiative to understand policies, regulations, and instructions. You are required to deliver quality services. Most importantly, you must work and conduct yourself in a professional manner that is appropriate for your job and that exemplifies the values of the County Vision.

It is important to know that your performance is formally evaluated at the end of your probationary period and annually after that. If you do not meet performance requirements and expectations, or your behavior is unacceptable, you may be released if you are a first-time probationer. If you are serving a promotional probation, and your performance does not meet expectations, you may be discharged or reduced.

Your probationary period is the final step in the selection process. Generally, there are only two rating choices at the end of probation – *Competent* or *Unsatisfactory*. There are three ratings possible for participants in the Management Appraisal and Performance Plan – *Exceptional, Merit* or *Unsatisfactory*. An *Unsatisfactory* rating constitutes failure of probation and results in reduction or release from service.

County probationary periods can last anywhere from six months to one year, depending on the position you hold. Most probationary periods are six months. If you are not sure about the length of your probation, ask your supervisor.

Customer Service Principles

Isn't it frustrating when you call a business and get the "runaround" when trying to reach the right person? How do you feel when a person you're talking to has little patience for you because it is "not their job"?

We are all responsible for quality customer service. When you do not know what to do, get help. Do not let the customer, client, patient, or taxpayer leave until you check with your supervisor and provide the appropriate assistance.

Quality customer service is:

- Accurate
- Prompt
- Complete
- Courteous
- Respectful
- Professional

In the County, we are expected to assist all of the people who contact us, even when the issue is not in our area of responsibility. Taking the extra step will establish goodwill with the public. That may even translate into making some calls to find out who or where the appropriate assistance is and transferring the customer, giving the customer the correct number, or having that employee return the customer's call. Or, if you receive a misdirected piece of mail, looking up the correct employee or department and forwarding it as soon as possible. A good course of action would be checking with your supervisor to see what should be done to provide the service.

Confidentiality

As a County employee, you may be in a position to receive confidential information about County residents or other employees, such as details about the conditions of someone's finances or health.

It is vital that you protect the confidentiality of the information you receive as part of your job, only disclosing information to people within the County government who need to know the information as part of their jobs. A violation of this confidentiality is a breach of the public trust that would seriously hurt the County's ability to serve its citizens, not to mention the possibility of legal action.

Professional Appearance

Your personal appearance on the job is important. It's part of how you represent the County. It's part of being professional.

On first impression, the public judges our competence by how we look. Whether you're a nurse, laborer, groundskeeper, clerk, or accountant, clothes that are too casual or inappropriate for the job may tend to make the customer mistrust your ability.

No matter what our assignment is, it is important that we each present a neat, professional appearance appropriate to the work being done. A smile helps you present a positive, willing attitude and immediately makes your customer welcome.

Telephone Procedures

As a County employee, you will be expected to answer the telephone in a certain manner. The exact method varies from one department to the next, and, in some cases, depends upon the type of job you have. You should always be courteous and helpful. Check with your supervisor about the appropriate greeting to use when you answer the telephone.

Performance Evaluation System

As a County employee, it is extremely important that your work is evaluated. During the course of your employment, you may receive both informal and formal performance reviews. Evaluations let you know how you're doing and give you guidance on how to do your job even better. According to Civil Service Rules, the department is required to give permanent employees a written evaluation of their probation, and thereafter, annual written evaluations. Your supervisor will discuss your performance evaluation report with you and provide you with a copy. Some temporary employees may also receive performance evaluation reports.

Outside Employment

Within certain limitations, County employees may hold second jobs. You must report a second job to your department by submitting a completed *Outside Employment* form to your supervisor. As a permanent employee working 40 hours per week, you cannot work more than 24 hours a week in a second job. More importantly, your second job

cannot create a conflict of interest with your County job, such as a County real estate appraiser doing private appraisals within the County or a County social worker working for a private agency that also services County clients. For more information on conflicts of interest, see the "Conflict of Interest" section in this handbook, or ask your supervisor or your departmental personnel/human resources office.

Attendance/Tardiness

You are expected to report to work each day, and arrive on time in accordance with your work schedule. You are required to notify your supervisor if you're going to be late or absent. In some departments, you are required to call in within a particular time limit. You must follow your work schedule, including observing your lunch and break times. Your supervisor will explain the attendance requirements for your work area.

Requesting Leave Time

Even though you may have earned time off, you must get authorization to use it. Request time off, in advance, through your supervisor or someone identified by your supervisor to contact in the supervisor's absence. Make sure you have approval before taking time off from work. Always follow the procedures and instructions for your work area.

Conflict of Interest

As part of earning and maintaining the public trust, you must do your job within regulations and professional standards. This means that you keep your personal interests separate from your work duties and activities. The reason this is so important is that your actions reflect upon the County government as a whole.

A conflict of interest occurs when you allow personal relationships, money (or the promise of money), or other outside factors to influence how you do your job. This is against County policies and may be illegal. Employees found to be involved in a conflict of interest could face severe penalties.

Using your common sense will help you avoid a conflict of interest. If you are not sure, ask your supervisor or your departmental personnel/human resources office.

Depending on the position you hold, you may be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration form from time to time. For all questions concerning possible conflicts of interest and the Conflict of Interest Declaration form, see your supervisor.

Lobbyist Rules

Part of the effort to prevent conflicts of interest focuses on lobbyists and lobbying firms. This is because the nature of a lobbyist's job is to sway the opinions of people in authority, but to do so in a legal, aboveboard way. County departments must report people and businesses they have contact with that could be considered lobbyists or lobbying firms.

A County employee cannot accept a gift or gifts totaling more than $50.00 in value in any calendar month, and a lobbyist or lobbying firm cannot make a gift or gifts totaling more than $50.00 in value to a County employee in any calendar month. [Section 2.160.120 of the County Code]

The kind of trinkets that companies give out at trade shows, like pens, are not a problem. Things that are obviously more expensive, like tickets to sporting events or concerts, could be a problem. <u>To be on the safe side, it is best not to accept gifts from lobbyists or anyone doing business or potentially doing business with the County.</u> Check with your supervisor or departmental personnel/human resources office if you need more information.

Ethical and Moral Standards

Integrity and accountability are key values in the County philosophy. Like responsiveness and professionalism, they are work behaviors needed to earn and maintain the public trust.

Because we are in positions where public trust is granted, the public and our managers expect that they will be able to depend on what we say and do. They expect honesty and integrity from us at all times.

You will have access to information about individuals and companies that you must not pass on to others or use for personal gain. Just as you are not allowed to accept special favors from the public because of your job with the County, you are also not allowed to do special favors for people, such as moving your friends to the front of the line.

We are expected to deal with the public and each other honestly and to conduct ourselves with integrity. You will have access to equipment, supplies and, in some cases, money. The rule is simple, we are accountable for what we do – we do not engage in any behavior that would compromise the County, or be an embarrassment to the County.

Whether we are at a work site, in uniform at any location or driving a County vehicle, we are expected to conduct ourselves so that we do not create even an impression that we are being unethical or unfair.

Use of County Property

County property is purchased with taxpayer money for use in conducting the County's business. Use of County property and equipment for personal business is prohibited. Using County property for personal business abuses your position as a County employee and is unethical and, in some cases, illegal. Departments have policies regarding the use of any special equipment that may be required for particular jobs.

Vehicles

If required to use a County vehicle on the job or even if allowed by management to take a County vehicle home on an evening, weekend, or holiday, remember that the vehicle is to be used only for transporting you to and from your work site and is not to be used for personal business.

Telephones

County telephones and other telecommunications equipment and services are to be used for County business only. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Computers and the Internet

A computer is just as much a piece of property as a vehicle or a desk. Remember that the computer is to be used for County business only. If you need to take a County computer off-site, remember to get the approval of your supervisor first.

You might have access to the Internet as part of your job. The same rules apply to surfing the Internet on a County-owned computer as to using the computer itself – use the Internet for business purposes only. Check with your supervisor to see if you will have Internet access on the job.

Political Activity

Just because you're a County employee does not mean that you give up your right to participate in the political process. But, because you are a County employee, you have a responsibility to limit your political activities in these ways:

- Keep your political activity separate from your job and away from your workplace.
- Do not publish or say anything that implies County endorsement of any political candidate.
- Do not engage in political activity or solicit for funds during work hours, on County property, or while wearing a County uniform.

Generally speaking, just exercise good judgment. If you have a question, check with your supervisor.

Reporting Fraud

One of the ways you can help protect the public trust is to report instances of fraud or abuse of authority by County employees if and when you discover it. The best way to file a report is by going directly to your supervisor or manager. However, you should know that the County has established a Fraud Hotline to provide individuals with a way to report fraudulent activity anonymously. Allegations reported over the Hotline are evaluated and investigated by the Auditor-Controller.

The Fraud Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll free at 1-800-544-6861 or locally at 213-974-0914. Investigators are available to answer the Hotline telephone between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Messages can be left on the Hotline after hours and on weekends and holidays.

The Hotline can also be reached by email at fraud@auditor.co.la.ca.us, and by standard mail at: Employee Fraud and Health Inspection Fraud Hotline, Department of Auditor-Controller, 320 West Temple Street, Suite 380, Los Angeles, California 90012-3208.

What to Report:

- Missing Cash
- Embezzlement
- Nepotism
- Falsified Documents
- Personal Use of County Assets
- Management Improprieties
- County Health Inspector Improprieties
- Theft of Equipment and Supplies
- Inspection Kickbacks/ Bribery
- Abuse of Work Hours
- Conflict of Interest
- Workers' Compensation Abuse
- Vendor Kickbacks
- Other Improprieties

The Hotline is not for reporting welfare improprieties. Such problems can be reported by calling 323-777-4959. Informants can remain anonymous. The County's "Whistle-Blower" Ordinance [County Code Section 5.02.060] protects informants who report alleged wrongdoing or acts of fraud from retaliation by County officers, managers, or employees.

Appendix J

Getting Ready for Success!

A Guide to Effective Employment Interviewing from the County of Los Angeles Department of Human Resources

Lisa M. Garrett, Director of Personnel

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in obtaining employment with the County of Los Angeles. In concert with the County's Strategic Plan Goal of Workforce Excellence, the Department of Human Resources has created this guide to provide you with information on how to prepare for your interview. Specifically, this guide will help you:

- ★ understand the function of the interview;
- ★ identify the qualifying requirements of the job;
- ★ identify your qualifications and match them to the job requirements;
- ★ formulate effective responses to interview questions;
- ★ practice and prepare for your interview; and
- ★ learn about the County's interview process and procedures.

Who should use this guide?

This guide targets the entry- to mid-level job seeker. However, it may be useful to anyone who wishes to interview more effectively.

Why do we conduct interviews?

If you have ever sought a job in the past, chances are you have gone through an interview. Like other employers, the County requires a face-to-face interview as part of our hiring process for most jobs. This is because the interview is an effective method for measuring a candidate's ability to successfully perform on the job.

At the County of Los Angeles, interviews are typically conducted during an *examination,* which is the process of evaluating the qualifications of candidates through methods such as a written test, structured interview, evaluation of training and experience, etc. A *structured interview* is an oral test in which all candidates are asked the same set of questions, and responses to the questions are evaluated according to previously developed standards.

The structured interview is an opportunity for **US** to:

- ★ determine whether the knowledge, skills, and abilities you possess correspond with those needed for successful performance on the job; and
- ★ gain information about the specific nature and depth of your work experience, such as the types of assignments and projects you have completed.

In addition, the interview is an opportunity for **YOU** to:

- ★ demonstrate and discuss your background and qualifications as they relate to the demands of the job;
- ★ present yourself as a qualified candidate with marketable skills; and
- ★ obtain further information about the nature and responsibilities of the job.

Disclaimer

Though this guide presents useful and practical information on this subject area, there is *no guarantee* that someone who reads this guide will be able to perform better on a County examination. By merely using this guide, you consent to understanding and agreeing with this disclaimer.

Preparing for the Interview

Although you may not know exactly what will be asked of you during the interview, how prepared you are for the interview is up to you! Adequate preparation will assist you in presenting your qualifications in the most favorable light and will help you to feel more confident in general. The following information is designed to help you ***GET READY FOR SUCCESS!***

Learn about County government

A job is more than a fixed set of responsibilities; rather, it must be viewed within the context of the entire organization. Taking the time to familiarize yourself with the County of Los Angeles will increase your understanding of the functions of the job and reflect well on you during the interview. You can visit the County's website (http://lacounty.info) to learn about our:

- ★ vision statement;
- ★ organizational structure/division of responsibilities;
- ★ programs and services;
- ★ client/customer base; and
- ★ promotional and training opportunities.

Learn about the job

To get ready for the interview, try to learn all you can about the job you are seeking. The County provides two important documents that can help you accomplish this:

	Job Bulletin	Class Specification
Information provided:	★ Duties and responsibilities of the job ★ Minimum requirements and desirable qualifications (e.g., education, experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, etc.) ★ Examination components (i.e., written test, interview, performance test, etc.) ★ Whom to call to request a reasonable accommodation, if needed.	★ General description of the job ★ Typical duties performed on the job ★ Minimum requirements
How to access:	★ In Person: Department of Human Resources 3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 100 Los Angeles CA 90010 (213) 738-2084 ★ Online: http://dhr.lacounty.info (click on "Job Information")	★ Online: http://dhr.lacounty.info (click on "Class Specifications")
Available:	★ Only when applications are being accepted for the job	★ Always[1]

[1] If you find a job that interests you, but the County is not currently accepting applications for that job (i.e., a job bulletin is not available), you can complete a Job Interest Card (visit http://dhr.lacounty.info, click on "Job Information, and then "Job Interest Card"). By completing this card, you will receive an email when the County begins accepting applications for the job.

The information provided on the Job Bulletin and Class Specification will help to further direct your interview preparation and give you specific insight as to the areas that will be assessed during the interview.

"The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today." -H. Jackson Brown Jr.

The areas on which you will be assessed during the interview depend on the level of the job you are seeking. Interviews for entry-level jobs typically focus more on general skill and ability areas than on job-specific knowledge areas that you would likely have to acquire through job experience. Though not all inclusive, here are some examples of areas on which you may be assessed:

★ *Adaptability*: To readily adjust to changing circumstances and/or modify behavior appropriately to new or changing situations in order to reach an objective.

★ *Customer Service Skills*: To meet the needs of internal and external customers/clientele in a manner that is professional, courteous, helpful, timely, responsive, proactive, accurate, and knowledgeable.

★ *Dependability*: To attend work on time and as scheduled; to perform under minimal or intermittent supervision; and to maintain the confidentiality of information and materials where appropriate.

★ *Initiative*: To take action independent from external influence when recognizing or anticipating potential problems and identifying, developing, and implementing solutions.

★ *Interpersonal Communication Skills*: To establish and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, customers, etc.

★ *Office Skills*: To utilize job-related equipment (e.g., personal computer, fax machine, photocopier, etc.) and software programs (e.g., MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, etc.).

★ *Oral communication skills*: To explain information to individuals and understand oral information and instructions from individuals while communicating in person and/or by telephone.

★ *Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Ability*: To analyze relevant information and to make logical and effective decisions that are in line with organizational objectives.

★ *Work Skills*: To organize and prioritize a workload and to perform accurate and detailed work.

Assess your knowledge, skills, and abilities

Once you have studied the job bulletin and/or class specification to learn about the job, you should think about your experiences that best match the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of the job. Develop a list of:

★ work and volunteer activities you have performed;
★ degrees, certificates, and awards or acknowledgements you have earned; and
★ coursework you have completed (such as a business or software class).

Then, take each item on your list and ask yourself:

★ What did I learn from this experience?
★ What problems did I encounter and how did I overcome them?
★ What were the most complex tasks and projects I completed?
★ What was my contribution to the organization or class?

Answering these kinds of questions will aid you in illustrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities you have developed or enhanced that could help you perform the job.

Case Example

Jane is applying for the job of Office Assistant. Her work experience consists of two years as a Sales Office Clerk for Shoreline Realty, Inc. Her duties at Shoreline consisted chiefly of maintaining client files using a hardcopy filing system; creating documents and correspondence using Microsoft Word; managing employee information using Microsoft Excel; and greeting and providing assistance to clients both in person and by telephone. While at Shoreline, Jane was commended for her exceptional customer service skills and for implementing an overhaul of the office filing system.

How would Jane best match her work experience to the duties of an Office Assistant?

Duties and responsibilities of an Office Assistant:	*Jane's related work experience:*	*Some of the knowledge, skills, or abilities she demonstrated:*
Maintains files, records, logs, and other information resources.	★ Filed hard copies using an alphanumeric system containing over 10,000 files; ★ Maintained a client appointment log for approximately 30 office staff; ★ Recommended and successfully designed and implemented a plan to overhaul the office's hardcopy filing procedures and structure.	★ Adaptability ★ Dependability ★ Problem Solving/Decision-Making Ability ★ Initiative ★ Work Skills
Uses a personal computer and word processing software programs to create and maintain documents and forms.	★ Used MS Word to design flyers and forms and produce correspondence; ★ Used MS Excel to maintain employee work schedules and track sales and hours worked; ★ Completed a certificate program in MS Word software training.	★ Office Skills
Greets and assists callers and visitors to the office in person and by telephone.	★ Provided lunch coverage for the office receptionist; ★ Assisted clients over the telephone; ★ Received three letters of commendation from clients for providing excellent customer service.	★ Customer Service Skills ★ Interpersonal Communication Skills ★ Oral Communication Skills

Learn about the types of questions common to County structured interviews

At the County of Los Angeles, our structured interview questions are designed to assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the job. Most structured interview questions can be classified into one of the following formats, illustrated by the examples that follow:

★ ***Experience-Based*** interview questions inquire about the breadth and scope of your *application* of job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- *"What office equipment have you used on-the-job and what kinds of routine tasks did you perform using this equipment?"*
- *"Describe your experience classifying, cataloguing, reviewing, and evaluating books within a large-sized public library system."*

★ ***Behavior-Based*** interview questions require you to apply your knowledge, skills, and abilities in a job-related situation. The two types of behavior-based interview questions are **past behavior** and **situational**:

- *"Tell me about a time when you provided exemplary customer service. What were the circumstances, what did you do, and what were the results?"* (past behavior)
- *"An important client arrives at the office and demands to see your supervisor without an appointment. How would you handle this?"* (situational)

★ ***Knowledge-Based*** interview questions ask you to demonstrate a level of familiarity with the terminology, practices, concepts, and theories related to the career field in question:

- *"What accounting practices would you use to ensure that budget reporting obligations are fulfilled?"*
- *"What are the most important factors for a Social Worker to consider when attempting to establish a working relationship with a client, and why?"*

★ ***Personal Perspective-Based*** interview questions ask you to relate your viewpoint or perspective regarding a job-related variable:

- *"Why do you think it would be important for a person to be able to function under minimal supervision?"*
- *"What do you believe is the most important role for a consumer advocate in today's marketplace, and why?"*

Study the S★T★A★R★ method

Behavior-based interview questions are used with increasing frequency in organizations. This is because they are an effective way to determine whether a candidate is qualified for the job, while at the same time increasing the objectivity of the interviewing process by focusing on job-related accomplishments. **Past-behavior** questions, which ask how you *have performed* in a previous, job-related circumstance, are based on the premise that past behavior and performance are good predictors of future behavior and performance (i.e., how you have behaved in a past situation is a good indicator of how you are going to behave in the same or similar situation). **Situational** questions, which ask how you *would perform* in a job-related situation, are based on the premise that the behaviors that you say you would perform in a situation are the actual behaviors that you will perform in a similar situation.

Formulating effective responses to behavior-based interview questions that focus on past behaviors rests on being able to tell the interviewers a "story" that demonstrates the nature of the task or problem, the strategies you planned and implemented, and the results of your actions. As illustrated below, the S★T★A★R★ method of responding will help you to form effective responses to behavior-based questions.

Situation: *What occurred or what was the assignment?*

- Clearly and concisely describe the situation so that the interviewers can place themselves in your place and understand the event, the circumstances surrounding the event, and the people involved.

Tactics: *What strategy did you develop to handle the situation?*

- Tell the interviewers about the plan you created to handle the problem, making sure that it adequately accounts for the details in the situation you described.

Action: *How did you implement your strategy?*

- After describing your plan, tell the interviewers the *specific* actions you took to resolve the problem.

Results: *What was the outcome?*

- Describe the results of your actions. Make sure to highlight the *specific* outcomes so the interviewers fully comprehend what you accomplished. If things did not turn out as you planned, focus on the positive by telling the interviewers what you learned from the experience and what you would do differently next time. This lets the interviewers know that you see mistakes or failures as opportunities for growth.

By following this response format, you will provide the interviewers with evidence that you can handle situations that may be faced by someone working in the job for which you are interviewing.

S★T★A★R★ method in action

The two chief types of behavior-based interview questions are past behavior and situational (see pages 5-6 for more information). Remember, the difference between these two types of questions is that with past behavior questions, the focus is on "What *did* you do?" while with situational questions it is on "What *would* you do?" Note the following examples to see how the S★T★A★R★ method can be applied to both question types:

Past Behavior Question:

Interviewer: *"Tell us about a time when you implemented a change in a process or system at your job that had a positive impact on your organization. In your response, please describe the situation, what you did to improve it, and the results."*

Situation: *What occurred or what was the assignment?*

Response: "When I worked at Generic Conglomerate, Inc. as an Office Assistant, I noticed that our electronic client database could hold a maximum of 300,000 records, and that we were already storing 290,000 records in the system. This meant that we would soon run out of available memory. This was due primarily to the numerous duplicate files in the system."

Tactics: *What strategy did you develop to handle the situation?*

Response: "I informed my supervisor of the situation and asked her if I could devise a plan to clean the database. With her approval, I developed a plan to identify the duplicate records based on a client's last name and address. I presented my plan to my supervisor, and she approved it.

Situational Question:

Interviewer: *"You are working as an Office Assistant and one of your duties is to maintain an electronic database of client information. One day you notice that the database is running out of available memory, and that many of the files are unnecessary duplicates. How would you handle this problem?"*

Situation: *What occurred or what was the assignment?*

Response:

(Does not apply. Situation provided by the interviewer.)

Tactics: *What strategy would you develop to handle the situation?*

Response: "I would inform my supervisor of the problem and obtain her approval to develop a plan to remove the duplicate records in the database. Next, I would determine a way to identify the duplicate records based on a unique identifier like a client's last name and address. I would present my plan to my supervisor and gain her approval before putting it into action."

(continued on the next page)

Past Behavior Question:

Action: *How did you implement your strategy?*

Response: "I ran a query to produce a report that identified records with the same last name and address. I then printed out a report of the duplicate records and compared them to ensure that I kept the one with the most complete and up-to-date information. After identifying all the duplicate records, I went into the system and carefully deleted them."

Results: *What was the outcome?*

Response: "Input and retrieval of client information became considerably easier due to the cleaning and consolidation. The available memory increased by 20 percent, which saved the firm the expense of having to purchase additional memory prematurely. Also, I was approved to attend training on the advanced features of the database program."

Situational Question:

Action: *How would you implement your strategy?*

Response: "I would run a query in the system according to a unique identifier like last name and address. From the query, I would produce a report of the duplicates and compare the records so that I retain the records with the most complete and up-to-date information. I would then go into the system and carefully remove the duplicate records."

Results: *What would be the outcome?*

Response: I believe this plan would free additional memory and increase efficiency. It would probably also save the company the expense of prematurely purchasing additional memory for the system."

Practice, practice, practice!

Rare is the person who is able to "ace" an interview without having practiced beforehand. Indeed, most successful job seekers have learned that the best strategy for demonstrating their qualifications during the actual interview is to have practiced responding to questions before the interview.

Practicing for your interview will help you to:

- ★ anticipate the types of questions you may be asked;
- ★ clarify your thoughts with respect to what you want to convey in responding;
- ★ identify areas of strength and weakness; and
- ★ develop a presentational style you feel at ease with.

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." –Henry David Thoreau

Mock interviews provide an excellent opportunity for you to practice for your interview. Ask a friend to take on the role of "Interviewer" by asking you realistic questions related to the job for which you are applying. During the mock interview, be sure to practice the S★T★A★R★ method and follow these general guidelines for interview success:

★ **WHEN LISTENING:**
- Be attentive. Lean forward slightly to indicate interest.
- Make sure you understand exactly what is being asked before you respond.
- Make good eye contact with the interviewers.

★ **WHEN RESPONDING:**
- Don't be afraid to allow a moment of silence to occur while you take the time to formulate your thoughts. Rushing can cause your response to be incomplete or disorganized, so be sure to take some time to organize a good response.
- Avoid speaking too quickly. Make sure your responses are clear, concise, and complete.
- Avoid the use of slang and phrases such as "um," "ah," "you know," and "like" to fill in between your statements.
- Avoid using "impressive" words that you do not use in your daily conversations. You may use the word inappropriately, which will have the opposite effect of what you intended.
- Use technical jargon or acronyms related to your field only if you are required to do so in order to respond. Otherwise it is best to stick with easily understood language.
- If you worked as part of a team, focus on *your* specific role and what *you* specifically accomplished. Remember that the interviewers are evaluating you! To ensure that you speak about your contributions to a team, speak in the first person by saying, "I did" not "We did."
- Keep your responses focused on what was actually asked. You want to discuss all relevant information, but don't get so caught up in the details that you forget what was asked.
- Be positive and enthusiastic. Frame your responses in a positive light. If the information is negative, think about what you learned from the situation and convey this to the interviewer. Never complain about past employers.
- You should be doing most of the talking. Interviewers can only evaluate you on what you say, so include all relevant information about your qualifications fully, and give examples from your experience with all of your answers. Avoid giving only "yes" or "no" answers.
- Make sure you are not conveying negative body language (such as slumping posture, crossed arms, leaning backward, etc.) which may send the wrong message about you.
- Manage your time and pace yourself so you have an opportunity to respond to each question. You should probably spend no more than 1-2 minutes responding to most questions (more time may be required for multi-part questions).
- Be honest!

★ **RELAX AND BE CONFIDENT!**
- Make sure you are comfortably seated in your chair before the interview begins so that all of your attention is focused on the questions you will be asked.
- Avoid excess body language such as gesturing with your hands; avoid displays of nervous mannerisms as well (e.g., nail biting, hair twisting, knuckle cracking, drumming fingers, etc.).

After the mock interview, ask your friend to critique your responses and general performance. Some questions to ask include: Did you provide enough information in your responses for him/her to make an accurate judgment of your qualifications? Did your poise and demeanor send the right message?

Seek additional resources

Though we cannot specifically endorse or recommend any interview preparation resources beyond this guide, the following may prove valuable if you would like to pursue or engage in additional interview preparation activities:

- ★ California WorkSource centers, funded in part by the County of Los Angeles, offer free interviewing workshops. Visit http://www.worksourcecalifornia.com/ for more information.
- ★ Many colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area provide interview training to current students and alumni, often free of charge or for a small fee.

Dress for Success

You should dress in "business casual" to "traditional business" attire for the interview. Where your attire falls within this range should depend on the job for which you are interviewing. Choose your outfit at least a day in advance and make sure it is clean, pressed, and fits you well. You will want to minimize the use of make-up, jewelry, and cologne, as these things tend to draw focus away from you as the candidate.

Plan your travel

Get directions at least a day in advance. Map the address of the interview site and choose an alternate route in case of traffic tie-ups. Generally, the County does not validate parking for job candidates, so bring a reasonable amount of cash to pay for parking. If possible, drive by the location ahead of time and note the parking location and rates.

The Day of the Interview

On the day of the interview, you should allocate at least <u>two hours</u> to spend at the interview site. Interviews occasionally run later than scheduled, so be prepared to stay if necessary. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled interview to allow time for parking and check-in. Have proper identification as indicated on your invitation letter, as well as anything else you have been advised to bring.

After entering the interview site, inform the receptionist of your arrival. He/she will let the interview coordinator know that you are waiting. While you wait to be called, take a moment to center your thoughts and get comfortable.

Turn **OFF** any portable audio or video devices (i.e., cell phones, pagers, Palm Pilots, etc.) prior to the start of the interview. Additionally, you should refrain from making or receiving any phone calls while you are waiting to be interviewed because this would disturb other candidates who are also waiting and/or being interviewed.

During the Interview

The interview itself can last anywhere from <u>15 minutes to 1 hour</u>, or as indicated on your invitation letter. Candidates are each given the same amount of time to interview. In order to get the most from your time, start it off like a winner. Offer a firm handshake and a pleasant smile when introducing yourself. Keep in mind that

- ★ there will most likely be two interviewers and you should direct your responses to each, not just to the one who asked the question.
- ★ the interviewers may be taking notes while you respond. Don't let this distract you.
- ★ the interviewers may ask follow-up questions to obtain more information about your response.

After the Interview

Congratulations, you've made it through the interview! Once the interview has concluded, be sure and thank the interviewers for their time and offer each a firm handshake.

After your interview, the interviewers will evaluate your responses according to predetermined rating standards based on the requirements of the job. To ensure consistency and accuracy during the examination interview, the interviewers are trained in all aspects of the interview process, including how to apply scoring standards uniformly to all candidates.

Once all interviews have been completed, interview materials and scores are reviewed and processed by the analyst in charge of the examination. Score information will be sent to you via standard U.S. Mail <u>only</u>, to the mailing address you have provided on your application. **Immediately notify the analyst in charge of the examination of any changes to your mailing address** (refer to the job bulletin for information on who to contact).

About confidentiality

Because the County examination process is competitive, all examination content must remain confidential. You will not be able to take notes during the interview, and you must not discuss any of the content of the interview with anyone. If you are found to have discussed content related to the interview, you will not only put yourself at a disadvantage by helping other candidates to score higher than you, but you may also be disqualified from participating in this and any future examination.

Ready for Success Checklist

This checklist was created to assist you in preparing for your interview. Here we have listed some of the activities you can do to help you perform your best.

Did you remember to...

- ☐ ...familiarize yourself with the County's operations?
- ☐ ...research the duties and requirements of the job by obtaining the job bulletin and/or class specification?
- ☐ ...develop a list of:
  - ★ work and volunteer activities you have performed;
  - ★ degrees, certificates, and awards or acknowledgements you have earned; and
  - ★ coursework you have completed (such as a business or software class)?
- ☐ ...match your knowledge, skills, and abilities to the requirements of the job?
- ☐ ...review the different types of questions you may be asked during the interview?
- ☐ ...read about the *S★T★A★R★* method and other general interview guidelines?
- ☐ ...practice being interviewed by a friend?
- ☐ ...seek additional resources, if needed?
- ☐ ...choose an appropriate outfit to wear?
- ☐ ...allocate at least two hours to spend at the interview site?
- ☐ ...map the location of the interview and set aside money for parking?
- ☐ ...congratulate yourself? You're on your way!

★★★

Your Feedback

In order to assist us in enhancing this guide, we greatly appreciate any feedback you would provide. Please email any suggestions to testprep@lacdhr.org. In the subject line of your email, please write "Interview Preparation Guide." Thank you in advance for your response.

Contributors

The Test Research Unit of the Department of Human Resources is pleased to offer this guide as part of a series of preparation tools and resources available to individuals proceeding through the County's employment process. Valuable input and guidance for this guide was provided by professionals throughout the County, including:

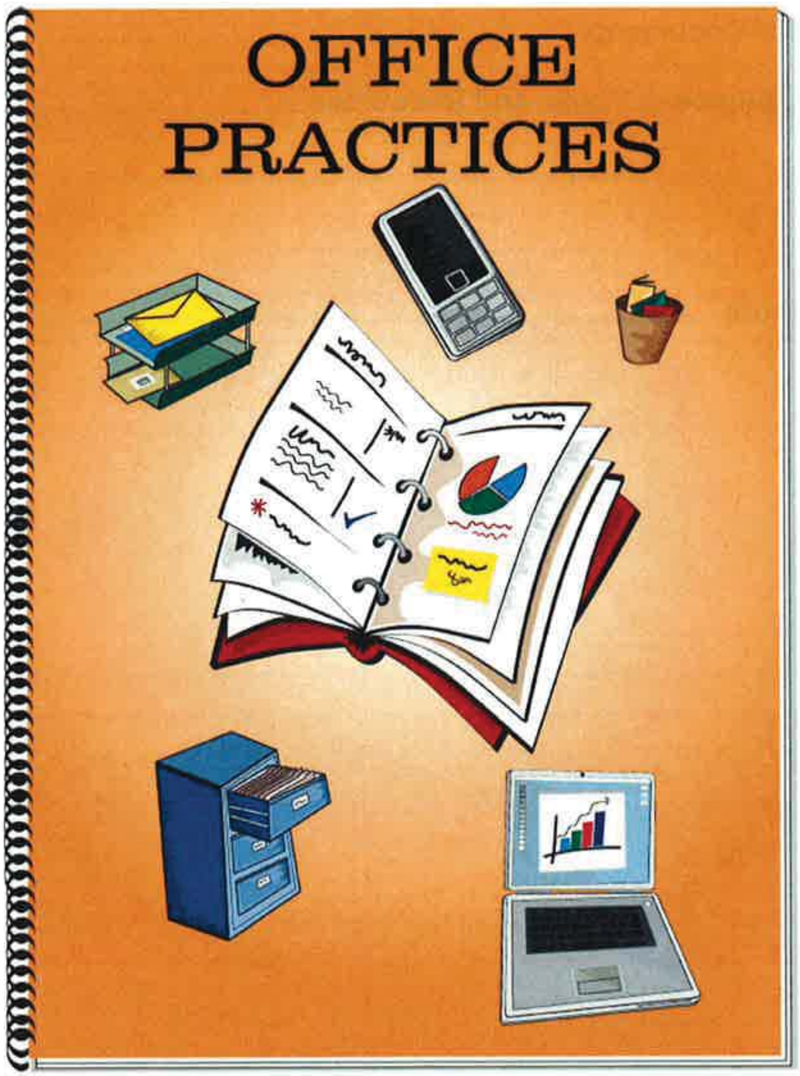
- ★ Christopher Stevens, Program Specialist, Chief Administrative Office;
- ★ Marc Shartzer, Principal Analyst, Human Resources; and
- ★ Angela Hunt, Human Resources Analyst, Human Resources.

For other employment test preparation resources, please visit the Department of Human Resources website (http://hr.lacounty.info) and click on "Job Information" and "Employment Test Preparation."

The County of Los Angeles wishes you well in your employment endeavors.

Appendix K

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Department of Human Resources
Workforce Planning, Test Research, & Appeals Division
3333 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 350, Los Angeles, CA 90010
24-Hour Jobline: (800) 970-LIST
http://dhr.lacounty.info



Lisa M. Garrett, Director of Personnel

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

Table of Contents

Introduction

The County of Los Angeles Department of Human Resources is pleased to offer this office practices information guide.

The role and importance of office practices has changed dramatically over the years. Innovations in technology have changed the nature of office work from processing paperwork to planning and organizing multi-step assignments. Understanding contemporary office practices is essential to succeed in today's workplace.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide an introduction to office practices by presenting you with *general information* covering this subject area and to spark your interest for further exploration.

Objectives

The office practices information guide has been designed to help you

- understand the definition of office practices.
- complete office assignments.
- manage your time in the office.
- use electronic and paper filing systems.
- be aware of relevant office equipment, tools, and resources.

Disclaimer

The office practices information guide provides an introduction on this subject matter; further study of this subject and related concepts may be necessary to gain the understanding needed to achieve your learning and/or career goals. Although this guide presents useful and practical information from this subject area, there is *no guarantee* that someone who reads it will be able to perform better on the job or on a County examination. By merely using this guide, you consent to understanding and agreeing with this disclaimer.

Who Should Use This Guide?

This guide was written for those who are new to working in an office environment. However, it may be useful for anyone seeking to better understand fundamental office practices.

This guide covers common office practices used by most office professionals, regardless of the setting in which they work (e.g., health care services, protective services, human resources, information technology, etc.). It will not address the unique office practices related to a specific work setting.

The Definition of Office Practices

To ensure we have a shared understanding of what office practices are, we have provided a formal definition that will be used throughout this guide:

> **Office Practices** are the day-to-day clerical and administrative activities performed by office professionals to support work-related functions and organizational decision makers.

To provide further clarification, the components of this definition are explained below:

- **Day-to-day clerical and administrative activities** – a wide range of activities including:
    - Performing office tasks (e.g., responding to phone/email requests, making reservations, typing a memo, etc.).
    - Operating office equipment (e.g., computer, photocopier, fax machine, etc.).
    - Managing, organizing, filing, and storing paper and electronic documents.

- **Office professionals** – employees who work in a wide range of jobs that require knowledge of office practices as part of their job duties; however, this guide will focus on the office practices of entry-level clerical and support staff (e.g., clerks, staff assistants, adoptions assistant, etc.).

- **Work-related functions** – the major activities of the organization (e.g., provides heath care services, protects life and property, trains employees, etc.).

- **Organizational decision makers** – the directors, managers, and supervisors who make decisions for an organization. Throughout this guide, we will use the term *manager* to describe all organizational decision makers.

Completing Office Assignments

Introduction

What Would You Do?

Your manager asks to speak with you. You quickly grab a pen and paper and walk down the hall to her office. She explains, "Something just came up and I need your help." She then discusses the details of a challenging assignment. To complete the work, you will need to accomplish several different tasks.

- What is your first step?
- What will you do to accurately complete the assignment on time?
- How will you report your results?

Office professionals work on a variety of clerical (e.g., filing, organizing, data entry, etc.) and administrative (e.g., preparing reports, problem solving, collecting information, etc.) assignments. The complexity of these assignments may vary from one to two steps (e.g., photocopying 50 training manuals) to more challenging work that requires multiple steps (e.g., creating a tracking system for inventory, assignments, or documents). This section will discuss a 5-step process to successfully complete the complex, multi-step office assignments.

Five Steps to Completing Assignments

1) Understanding the Assignment
2) Creating an Assignment Plan
3) Taking Action
4) Reviewing the Work
5) Reporting the Results

Step 1: Understanding the Assignment

When you receive an assignment, the first step is to understand the purpose of the assignment and the expectations your manager has about the outcome. If you and your manager have a different understanding, it will likely result in the assignment not being completed properly. To ensure you fully understand the assignment, make sure you are

- **listening** to the instructions.
- **taking notes** on important information.
- **asking questions** if you need clarification.
- **summarizing** the details of the assignment.

Next, we will elaborate on each of these four topics. Carefully consider the following suggestions and think of ways to apply them in your work as an office professional.

Listening
Listening is the key to understanding and is crucial for office communication. To become a more effective listener, you should

- discontinue other activities and give the speaker your full attention.
- maintain good eye contact.
- avoid interrupting or jumping to conclusions.
- pay attention to the main ideas (i.e., the "big picture") and the small details.

Taking Notes
It can be challenging for an office professional to remember detailed information while working in a busy office environment. Well written notes can serve as a reference to help you remember important information. When taking notes,

- write brief statements that cover the most important aspects of the instructions.
- write legibly so that you can read your notes at a later time.
- avoid focusing so much on writing that it affects your ability to listen.
- store your notes in an easily accessible place.

Helpful Tip:
Always have a pen and a pad of paper ready to take notes. You never know when your manager may ask to speak with you.

Asking Questions
You may need to ask questions to fully understand an assignment. Asking appropriate questions also demonstrates your attentiveness, professionalism, and commitment to your job and the organization. The table below provides examples of effective and less effective questions:

Less Effective Questions	Effective Questions
"What do *you* want?"	"How may I help you?"
"What do you want me to do?"	"Let me make sure I understand this assignment. I need to… Is this correct?"
"What is the point of doing this?"	"What are the goals and objectives of this assignment?"
"How much time do I get before I have to finish this assignment?"	"By what date would you like this assignment completed?"
"Who will see my work?"	"Who is the audience for this particular assignment?"
"Can I get someone to help me?"	"Are there any people, materials, or work samples that would be useful resources to help me complete this assignment?"

When asking questions remember that *how* you ask is just as important as *what* you ask. Non-verbal communication (e.g., body language, tone of voice, posture, etc.) can have a greater impact than verbal communication. For example, if a co-worker tells you she is listening to you (verbal), but reads an email (non-verbal) while you are speaking, then you are likely to feel that she is not actually paying attention. As the saying goes, "your actions speak louder than words."

For additional information on communication skills, please refer to our *Customer Service Information Guide*, which is available on the County of Los Angeles Online Test Preparation System.

Summarizing

Once you have received an assignment, it is helpful to summarize your understanding of the information back to your manager. This will help you to fully understand your manager's expectations, clarify any misunderstandings, and demonstrate your attentiveness. Be sure to ask additional questions if further information about an assignment is needed.

> **Helpful Tip:**
> **Newly hired office professionals need to become familiar with an office's organizational chart, which provides an overview of the positions within the office and the reporting relationships between positions.**

Step 2: Creating an Assignment Plan

Once you understand the assignment, the next step is to develop a plan to complete it. An assignment plan is a document you create to outline the steps needed to complete an assignment. Assignment plans are most effective when they are documented electronically in a word processing or spreadsheet program. This allows you to visualize the steps, review the plan frequently, quickly update the plan accordingly, and easily provide updates to your manager. Be sure to include any important due dates. An example of an assignment plan is provided below:

ASSIGNMENT PLAN

Assignment: Make the preparations for a training meeting conducted by Sybil (manager) for 20 regional supervisors on Thursday, February 13th at 10am.

Step 1: Confirm the training date with Sybil

Step 2: Contact department secretary to schedule a conference room that can hold up to 25 people.

Step 3: Obtain and copy all training materials, handouts, and visual aids.

Step 4: Send out an email invitation to all attendees before January 12th and request confirmation of their attendance before February 1st.

Step 5: Send reminder email to attendees on February 6th.

Step 6: Email Sybil a status update (copies and confirmed attendees) on February 10th.

Identifying Resources

When formulating a plan to complete an assignment, you can save considerable time and effort by identifying existing resources, which may include anyone or anything helpful to completing the assignment (e.g., co-workers, supplies, software, meeting rooms, work space, etc.). Additionally, answering the following questions may help to identify the resources available to help you complete your assignment:

- Is anyone else working on a related or similar assignment?
- Are there any relevant policies, procedures, or forms?
- Are there files, templates, or examples of similar assignments?
- What other tools can I use (e.g., Internet, books, handouts, etc.)?

Understanding Departmental Policies and Procedures

Each office has a set of specific policies and procedures to maintain order and consistency within the organization. A *policy* is a guiding principle used to set direction in an organization, while a *procedure* is a set of instructions used to implement organizational policies into action. Generally, office policies and procedures are contained in the organization's procedural manual.

These policies and procedures will vary based on the office and its needs. As an office professional, it is important to familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures so that you can organize your assignment plans in accordance with the standards set by your office. Be sure to discuss any questions regarding departmental policies and/or procedures with your manager.

Step 3: Taking Action

Once you complete the assignment plan, the next step is to put the plan into action, though you may need to obtain your manager's approval before starting. Be sure to refer to the assignment plan to avoid forgetting steps or missing due dates. Remember to keep your manager's expectations of the outcome in mind to help you stay focused and on target.

Check your work along the way and make corrections as needed. Identifying and correcting problems early will save you valuable time and effort. For some assignments, you may want to ask co-workers to review your work and provide feedback, where possible.

Sometimes unforeseen problems arise when completing assignments. Depending on the nature of the problems, you may be able to resolve them on your own and inform your manager if they will affect the completion of the assignment. However, more complex problems will need to be discussed with your manager before you take action.

> **Helpful Tip:**
> **Do <u>not</u> wait until the due date to communicate problems or concerns with your manager. Always inform your manager if another manager gives you an assignment.**

Step 4: Reviewing the Work

It is important to review your work carefully and thoroughly before submitting it to your manager. Answering the following questions can help you to evaluate the accuracy and quality of your work:

- Did I complete the assignment according to the guidelines and due dates established by my manager (review notes from Step 1)?
- Did I follow and complete all the steps in the assignment plan?
- Does the finished work meet my manager's expectations of the assignment?
- Did I review my work to ensure it is accurate?
- Is there anything else I can do to improve the quality of this assignment before submitting it?

Proofreading is important when reviewing your written work. Do not rely on spelling and grammar check software functions because they do not identify all mistakes. For example, a spelling check function will not notify you when you use the word "there" instead of the word "their." To proofread your work, pay attention to the following three areas:

- Format: The overall appearance and consistency.
- English Usage: The accuracy of spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Arithmetic: The accuracy of numbers and calculations.

It is helpful to review your documents on three separate occasions to check format, English usage, and arithmetic errors. Be sure to include the time to complete these reviews into your assignment plan.

Helpful Tip:
When proofreading, it is useful to quietly read the document out loud.

Step 5: Reporting the Results

Once you complete the assignment, the final step is to report the results to your manager in the requested delivery format (e.g., small report, gathered documents, short presentation, etc). When possible, keep an electronic copy of all documents related to the assignment in case the originals are misplaced. Remember to check with your manager before storing confidential or sensitive information.

When the assignment is finished, take a few moments to reflect on what you learned from the experience. What did you do well? What areas can be improved? Be open to feedback and suggestions from your manager. Remember, there are opportunities to learn and improve with every assignment you complete.

Section Summary

The beginning of this section presented a common situation faced by office professionals and highlighted the importance of being prepared. The five-step process we presented will help you to effectively respond to your manager's requests and develop the necessary skills to successfully complete office assignments.

Managing Office Time

Introduction

As an office professional, it is likely that you will be responsible for completing several different assignments at the same time. Effective time management will help you to successfully complete your assignments and meet established due dates, which will benefit you, your co-workers, your customers, and the organization.

Ways to Effectively Manage Your Time
• Create a Structured Time Management Plan • Make a Realistic Schedule • Control Your Time at Work • Be Flexible

Create a Structured Time Management Plan

A structured time management plan can help you effectively organize and evaluate your work assignments to complete them on time. Your plan should be both structured and realistic to make the best use of your time, while being flexible enough to handle unexpected changes and interruptions. Finding this balance can be difficult; but once achieved, it can help to increase your effectiveness, reduce job-related stress, and improve job satisfaction. A basic planning strategy includes evaluating your use of time, creating assignment summary lists, and making daily "To Do" lists.

Evaluate Your Use of Time

Understanding how your time is spent is the first step to ensuring that you effectively manage it. This type of evaluation will help you identify realistic approaches to planning your work-related activities, potential problems or limitations, and alternative ways to perform specific tasks.

To evaluate your use of time, it is helpful to create a daily activity log of the tasks you performed for a given day. You should complete daily activity logs for at least a week to gain an understanding of your use of time. These logs can be created using a software program (e.g., MS Word or Excel) and should contain the following five items:

- Date
- Start time
- Task
- Whether the task was planned or unplanned
- Duration

Below is an example of a daily activity log:

DAILY ACTIVITY LOG			
DATE: October 6th (Thursday)			
TIME	**TASK**	**PLANNED**	**DURATION**
8:00 a.m.	Entered customer requests into the computer database	YES	90 mins.
9:30 a.m.	Attended a staff meeting	YES	30 mins.
10:00 a.m.	Break	YES	15 mins.
10:15 a.m.	Helped head secretary locate missing account invoice	NO	15 mins.
10:30 a.m.	Returned customer calls/emails	NO	90 mins.
12:00 p.m.	Lunch break	YES	60 mins.
1:00 p.m.	Pulled archived case files for the manager	YES	120 mins.
3:00 p.m.	Break	YES	15 mins.
3:15 p.m.	Copied and faxed various reports to field offices	YES	45 mins.
4:00 p.m.	Typed minutes from staff meeting	YES	60 mins.

Once you have documented your work activities for a week, review your daily activity logs to see how your time was spent and identify useful and problematic trends and/or patterns (e.g., tasks take longer to complete after lunch, staff meetings usually occur in the morning, customers call early in the week, etc.). Below are sample questions you can use to evaluate your daily activity logs:

- Which tasks take me the most time to complete?
- When does my manager typically give me assignments?
- When do staff meetings usually occur?
- What time of day do the most interruptions (e.g., unplanned calls, meetings, assignments, etc.) occur?
- What are the reasons for interruptions?
- Can I reschedule certain tasks to help me be more efficient?
- Can I combine certain tasks?
- What skills can I develop to become more efficient?

After evaluating your time, make specific plans to improve your use of time. Consider the following suggestions:

- Budget your time to anticipate high- and low-demand work periods (e.g., scheduling difficult tasks when you tend to have the fewest interruptions).
- Learn or enhance a skill to become more efficient (e.g., customer service, software programs, reading comprehension, note-taking, etc.).
- Develop a list of resources, procedures, and tips to resolve routine problems (e.g., create a list of frequently used phone numbers).

It may not be possible to consistently evaluate your use of time in this manner; however, it is recommended to periodically re-evaluate your use of time to ensure you are effectively and efficiently performing your work.

Creating Assignment Summary Lists

Another planning strategy includes the use of assignment summary lists. An assignment summary list is a brief description of all the assignments you have been given. Similar to the activity log, an assignment summary list can be created using a software program (e.g., MS Word or Excel). The list should contain the following seven items:

- Priority level of the assignment as determined by your manager (e.g., high, medium, low).
- Description of the assignment.
- Date the assignment is due (and time if applicable).
- Estimated amount of time needed to complete the assignment.
- Name of the person who gave you the assignment.
- Location where the assignment is to be delivered or the method to deliver it (e.g., email address).
- Date you received the assignment.

An example of an assignment summary list is provided below:

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY LIST

PRIORITY	ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE/ TIME	TIME REQUIRED	REQUESTOR	LOCATION/ METHOD	DATE GIVEN
High	Information gathering	11/15 at 5pm	1 week	Sybil (Manager)	Main Office	11/6
High	Customer service	11/7 at 5pm	1 day	Customers	Phone/Email	11/6
Medium	Office supply requisition	11/30 at 10am	2 days	Carlos (Purchasing Asst.)	Purchasing Dept.	11/5
Medium	Reorganize files	11/21	2 weeks	Judy (Head Secretary)	Email	11/5
Low	Meeting notes	11/30 at 9am	2 days	Sybil (Manager)	Main Office	11/2

Sort the assignments according to priority by placing the highest priority items at the top of the list. Update the list each time a new assignment is given or if significant change occurs (e.g., change in priority or if work assignment has increased in size or complexity). Whenever possible, increase your estimated time to complete an assignment by 10% to allow for unexpected delays or changes.

Helpful Tip:
Large assignments can be broken down into smaller, more manageable tasks.

Making Daily "To Do" Lists

A "To Do" list is created from the assignment summary list and includes the specific tasks needed to complete each assignment. At the end of each day, review your assignment summary list and write down the specific tasks you can do the following day to progress towards completing your assignments. Once you have written several tasks, organize them based on their importance with the highest priority tasks listed at the top. Start by working on the items at the top of the list and work your way down. An example of a daily "To Do" list is provided below:

DAILY "TO DO" LIST

DATE: December 6th (Thursday)

PRIORITY	ASSIGNMENT	TASK	COMPLETED
High	Information gathering	Search the Internet for available file storage services to house inactive purchase order files.	✓
High	Customer service	Return all calls and emails regarding customer inquires and requests.	
Medium	Supply requisition	Create MS Excel spreadsheet for office supply purchases and enter the information from each office.	
Medium	Reorganize files	Research new filing systems for all the customer files.	
Low	Meeting notes	Type meeting notes into a MS Word document and send to the main office.	
Low	Supply requisition	Remind team leaders to submit their office supply requests before Friday.	

Notice how the daily "To Do" list consists of the tasks required to complete the assignments mentioned in the assignment summary list.

Keep the daily "To Do" list in a highly visible area on your desk or workstation so you can review it frequently throughout the work day. Keeping the list visible will allow you to monitor your progress, make adjustments, and note when tasks are completed. At the end of the day, review your work and add any unfinished tasks to the "To Do" list for the next day.

Control Your Time at Work

To be an effective office professional, you will need to use your work time efficiently. It is impossible to eliminate all distractions and obstacles; however, with some preparation, you can greatly improve your ability to successfully complete your work assignments. There are two main techniques to improve your control over work time: 1) organize your work and 2) minimize the impact of interruptions.

Organize Your Work

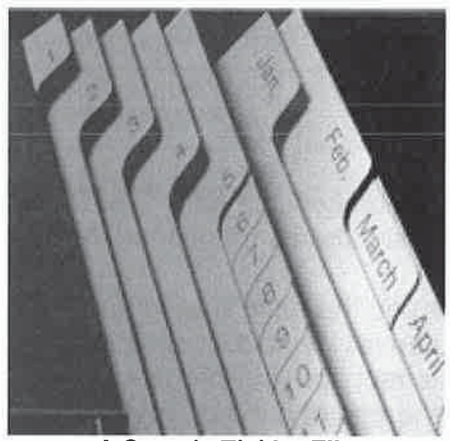
Organizing your workspace and materials is a powerful way to manage your time. Staying organized will help you remember critical pieces of information and quickly locate materials. The following suggestions provide ways to become more organized:

- Clear distractions and clutter from your workspace.
- Make important office equipment (e.g., phones, computers, fax machines, etc.) easily accessible, if possible.
- Organize essential office supplies and store them within close reach.
- Keep track of critical and frequently used documents by filing them daily (preferably in an electronic format).
- Create models and/or patterns from existing documents, memos, and forms (i.e., templates).
- Create a resource list of procedures and useful phone numbers.

> **Helpful Tip:**
> **When making a record of people you frequently contact, include the best time to reach them.**

Tickler Files

Tickler files are one way to organize your tasks and due dates so you can effectively control your use of work time. A tickler file is a basic filing system used to keep track of important information. It includes several well-organized folders containing all the relevant documents, forms, and instructions needed to accomplish the items on your "To Do" list and assignment summary lists.



A Sample Tickler File

When creating a tickler file system, office professionals can customize folders and content to meet their specific needs. Listed below is a five-step process to starting a basic tickler filing system:

Step 1: Obtain a set of 43 folders and labeling materials.

Step 2: Label the first 31 folders by number for each day of the month (e.g., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.).

Step 3: Label the rest of the folders for each month of the year (e.g., January, February, March, etc.).

Step 4: Place the folders in a file drawer or bin.

Step 5: Organize the folders so that the day folders are in front of the month folders. For example, on January 1st, you would have folders 1-31 in front of the February folder.

After creating the tickler file system, the following suggestions can help you use and maintain it:

SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
Place materials (e.g., documents, forms, instructions, etc.) in folders corresponding with the day you scheduled to work on them (not the due date).	It is January 15th and you have a form to complete and submit on January 20th. The form will take a few hours to complete. Place this form and all other related materials in the folder labeled "19th" so the form will be ready to submit on the following day.
File assignment materials scheduled in the future month(s) in the corresponding month folder.	It is January 15th and you have a form to submit in the middle of March. Place this form and all related materials in the folder labeled "March." Keep these documents together with a paperclip.
At the end of each month remove the contents from the next month's folder and place materials in the appropriate date folder for the next month.	It is January 31st, you take out the contents of the folder labeled "February" and find tasks that need to be completed on February 10th and 21st. Both tasks will take a few hours to complete. Put the materials for the 10th in the "9th" folder and the materials for the 21st in the "20th" folder.
Check the files daily and document tasks that need to be completed on the following day on your "To Do" list.	It is January 15th and you look into the "16th" folder and find information on a report that needs to be faxed on the 16th. You write down the task on your "To Do" list for the following day.
File task materials in a folder that will allow you sufficient time to complete the task before the due date.	It is January 15th and you have a report to complete by January 23rd. It will take you two to three days to complete. You place the materials in the "20th" folder.

These suggestions provide a brief summary of how a tickler file system works. Once a tickler file system is set up, review it periodically to ensure it is working effectively and make adjustments as needed.

Helpful Tip:
Whenever possible create a tickler file system on your computer using electronic folders. Another method is to use the MS Outlook task and calendar functions.

Minimizing the Impact of Interruptions

Interruptions are common and often necessary elements of the office professional's work environment. These unexpected activities may affect your schedule or workflow. They can occur during any part of the work day. Common interruptions include phone calls, unanticipated meetings with managers, and questions from a customer.

You can use your daily activity log to identify themes or patterns to the interruptions and then look for solutions to manage or minimize them. For example, if you frequently receive phone calls and emails regarding the procedure for submitting office supply requests, you can send out a memo outlining the directions and answering frequently asked questions. This may help reduce the number of calls and emails you receive regarding this issue.

Listed below are other suggestions to help reduce the impact of interruptions:

- Schedule a daily "quiet time" during which you do not respond to phone calls, answer email messages, receive visitors, etc. Be sure to discuss this option with your manager and obtain his/her approval before implementing.
- Refrain from lengthy telephone calls and excessive socializing with co-workers or customers.
- Be clear, concise, thorough, and provide demonstrations/examples when explaining detailed tasks (e.g., using office equipment, completing forms, submitting documents, etc.) to customers, co-workers, and/or managers. This will help reduce the need for re-training.
- Determine whether an interruption requires immediate attention or if you can schedule a more convenient, agreed upon time to resolve the issue.

It is important to use sensitivity and tact when managing interruptions. Be sure to consider the working relationship with customers, co-workers, and managers when developing strategies and discuss your plans with your manager before implementing them. Effectively and appropriately minimizing interruptions can help you make better use of your time at work.

Be Flexible

As changes in the office environment occur, it is important to adapt your time management approach to meet the needs of the situation. For example, an office professional working in a fast-paced, small office may use a different set of time management strategies than someone working in a larger office. Be sure to review your time management approach periodically to ensure you are getting the most out of your time.

Section Summary

Effective time management occurs with careful preparation, flexibility, and effort. By creating a structured time management plan, making realistic schedules, controlling your time at work, and being flexible, you can improve your ability to manage your time at work.

Managing Office Documents

Introduction

Document management is the process of receiving and storing office records and information. Typically, office professionals have the responsibility of maintaining, creating, and/or making recommendations regarding document management. This section will discuss

- different types of filing systems.
- strategies for managing paper and electronic documents.
- retention schedules and document storage.
- securing electronic and paper documents.

Types of Filing Systems

There are many different kinds of filing systems. Certain filing systems may be more appropriate than others depending on the situation. For this reason, an office may use a combination of several different filing systems.

There are five main document filing systems: alphabetic, numeric, subject, geographic, and chronological. Having a basic understanding of each system will help you effectively maintain a variety of documents. Listed below is a summary of these filing systems:

System	Characteristics	When to Use	Examples
Alphabetic	Arranged alphabetically from A to Z in this order: last name, first name, then middle name/initial	Use when organizing documents related to people.	Chang, Allison R. Coleman, Jill C. Jimenez, John Q., etc.
Numeric	Arranged according to code numbers (e.g., account number, ID number, invoice number, etc.)	Use when organizing confidential documents or when names are not available.	1001, 1002, 1003, etc.
Subject	Arranged alphabetically according to subject or topic	Use when organizing documents that have the same or related category.	Accounting Dept. Human Resource Dept. Information Technology Dept., etc.
Geographic	Arranged alphabetically according to location	Use when organizing documents by districts, regions, and/or jurisdictions.	Agoura Hills, Compton, Westwood, etc.
Chronological	Arranged according to date	Use when organizing documents in sequence or creating a timeline.	January, February, March, etc.

To illustrate the different filing systems, consider the following situation:

You have been assigned to organize the documents for a monthly workshop. To effectively manage the related documents, you create the following filing system:

- **Alphabetic**: You receive the names of individuals who will be attending the workshop. You create a file which contains a folder for each participant's registration information and arrange them alphabetically by the participant's name.
- **Numeric**: You must submit an inventory request form to order supplies for the workshops (e.g., markers, notepads, pens, etc.). This form contains a request number, and you create a file to organize the inventory request forms according to the request number.
- **Subject**: The monthly workshop covers a variety of topics (e.g., communication, time management, computer skills, etc.). You create a folder for each topic and label them accordingly.
- **Geographic**: Your department uses several different locations to conduct the workshops. You keep a separate folder containing relevant room information, directions, and contacts for each location.
- **Chronological**: You keep all the records for each monthly workshop in a file organized according to month. At the end of the year, the monthly files are archived in a file organized according to year.

General Guidelines and Standards for Alphabetical Filing

Alphabetical filing is the most common method for organizing documents. Its guidelines and standards are listed below:

Guidelines	Examples
1. For people, records should be filed alphabetically by last name, first name, then middle name/initial.	Chang, Allison R. Coleman, Jill C. Jimenez, John Q.
2. When people share the same last name, then order by first name then middle name/initial.	Simpson, Aaron Simpson, Charlie A. Simpson, Cynthia L.
3. For organizations, records should be filed by the first word of the organization's name.	Aaron Flores Graphic Design Accountants-R-Us Amber Consulting
4. When organization names have the same first word, order by second word.	West Coast Shipping Company West Coast Software West, Porter, & Associates
5. Numbers are filed sequentially before alphabetic characters.	5-Star Electronics 12 Good Lawyers Anderson Building Supplies
6. Follow the principle to file "nothing before something" (i.e., one-letter words are filed before words with two letters).	A to Z Bookkeeping Absolute Consulting Always-On-Time Accountants

Types of Documents

Documents can be either paper or electronic. Paper (i.e., hard-copy) documents may include any forms, records, receipts, or contracts kept in a file, folder, or binder. Electronic (i.e., soft-copy) documents may include computer files on a network, hard drive, external drive, or email. While paper and electronic documents can be identical in content, the storage management for each is quite different.

Managing Paper Documents

Despite advances in computer technology, paper documents still play an important role in the workplace. Office professionals frequently file, store, and retrieve paper documents. Effectively organizing these documents is critical to the success of an office. The following suggestions provide ways to help manage paper documents:

- Underline or write file labels on all documents (if possible).
- File documents daily to stay organized and avoid misplacing information.
- Use color coded file folders and labels to quickly identify and locate documents.

Managing Electronic Files

A majority of electronic files are stored on computers. Like paper documents, these files require careful organization and management. The following suggestions provide ways to help manage electronic files:

- Create electronic folders where you can store related documents.
- Be consistent in how you name files and folders. This will help you easily locate and identify files. For example, when updating a document that results in several versions, you should number each version in the filename (e.g., Office Practice Guide_v1, Office Practice Guide_v2, Office Practice Guide_v3, etc.).
- Periodically review your electronic documents to ensure your filing system is effective. Use judgment when making adjustments and discuss any major changes with your manager.

Retention Schedules

A retention schedule is an office policy that describes how long to keep documents on-site, when to transfer them to an off-site storage facility, and when to destroy them. The more documents an office uses, the more important it is to have an effective retention schedule. If you are involved in creating a retention schedule, there are several issues to consider:

- How often are the documents used, referenced, or requested?
- Are there any legal guidelines to consider?
- What are the potential long-term benefits to keeping the documents (e.g., research)?
- How much space is available for storage?
- How much will it cost to store the documents on-site versus off-site?
- Should documents that are no longer used be destroyed?

Considerations for Storing Office Documents

One important consideration is how often documents are accessed. For example, frequently used documents should be readily available, while seldom used documents can be stored in less accessible locations (e.g., storage facilities). Policies and procedures regarding document storage should be included in the retention schedule.

The storage of essential office documents is another important consideration. Essential documents (e.g., contracts, personnel records, and financial records) are items necessary to maintain business operation and include documents that are difficult to replace. During emergencies or disasters these documents would be critical to ensure the office is able to continue functioning.

The following are four examples of how essential documents are preserved:

- <u>Duplication</u>: Copying important documents and storing them in both electronic and paper formats.
- <u>Dispersal</u>: Storing duplicates at different office locations, if available.
- <u>On-Site Storage</u>: Securing documents in fireproof safes, cabinets, or vaults.
- <u>Off-Site Storage</u>: Storing documents in an off-site storage facility.

A final important consideration is to store documents in a neat and orderly manner. The following suggestions provide strategies on how to neatly store documents:

- Remove unnecessary items (e.g., rubber bands).
- File the most recent documents in the front of the folder.
- Place documents facing up with the top of the page at the left edge of the folder.
- Replace worn folders with new ones.
- Allow 3 to 4 inches of working space in vertical files.

Helpful Tip:
Whenever possible, office documents should be scanned and stored on a computer. This can provide better security of the documents and helps you be more organized. Check the office or department policy on document storage and scanning. Consult with your manager if you have any additional questions.

Maintaining Document Security

Maintaining the security of documents is an important part of protecting the information of an organization. Protecting confidential information is an ethical, and sometimes legal, responsibility of the office professional. The following suggestions provide information on how to secure paper and electronic files:

Securing Paper Files

- Place files in locked drawers/rooms when they are not in use.
- Secure the office and file keys.
- Monitor who uses the files and for what reasons by creating a check-out log.
- Follow the office retention schedule.
- Avoid leaving confidential information on desks, in the printer/fax output tray, or in the copy machine.
- Use secured interoffice envelopes, if available.

Securing Electronic Files

- Protect computer passwords by changing them frequently and by not posting them in your workspace.
- Lock, log off, or shut down the computer before leaving your workspace.
- Be cautious when opening email messages from people you do not know. Never open an email attachment unless you are sure of its content and sender.
- Only download files from trusted and/or approved sources.
- Establish a schedule for backing up important documents.
- Store backup copies off-site.

Never provide confidential information in either electronic or paper format to unauthorized staff or customers. Consult with your manager if questions arise.

Section Summary

This section provided methods to successfully manage office documents. As you continue to familiarize yourself with 1) the different types of filing systems, 2) the strategies for managing documents, 3) retention schedules and document storage, and 4) document security, you can improve your effectiveness as an office professional.

Using Office Equipment, Tools, and Resources

Introduction

Underlying the ability to complete assignments, manage office time, and manage office documents is the ability to operate office equipment. Being proficient with photocopiers, fax machines, scanners, computers, and other office equipment will directly impact your effectiveness on the job. This section will provide an overview of commonly used office equipment and computer software.

Office Equipment

Listed below are descriptions of some frequently used office equipment:

- **Photocopiers** – make paper duplications of documents.
- **Fax Machines** – transmit a copy of a document from one location to another.
- **Scanners** – convert a paper document into an electronic file (e.g., .pdf, .jpg, .bmp, etc.), which can make the document easier to access and also reduces paper volume.
- **Shredders** – destroy confidential documents by cutting them into very fine strips (strip-cut) or tiny paper chips (cross-cut). Cross-cut shredders are ideal for highly confidential documents because they cut the paper into small pieces that are difficult to put back together into the original form.

Computers

Computers are the most important equipment in today's office environment. They allow users to create, store, process, send, receive, and display electronic data. Office professionals use computers to perform many activities, such as:

- Writing letters, memos, and other documents.
- Storing and analyzing data.
- Managing records, forms, and other documents.
- Creating reports, presentations, handouts, and pamphlets.
- Communicating (e.g., email) and researching (e.g., Internet).

It is critical to stay current with technical advances in computer systems and programs. Office professionals should frequently assess their computer skills and take the necessary steps to further develop their proficiency.

Computers provide several tools that can help office professionals. Listed below are descriptions of the most commonly used software and tools:

Word Processing Software
Office professionals use word processing software (e.g., MS Word) to write, edit, and format office documents. Understanding this type of software is critical because nearly all paper correspondence is created using word processing software (including this information guide). Be sure that you are familiar with formatting functions (e.g., margins, page numbering, page breaks, etc.) so that you can quickly adapt to the layout and style used by any organization, department, and/or office.

Spreadsheet Software
Office professionals use spreadsheet software (e.g., MS Excel) to enter numerical or alphanumeric data, which can be organized or analyzed to obtain information. For example, spreadsheets are frequently used for monitoring budgets, tracking expenditures, and identifying trends.

Database Software
Office professionals use database software (e.g., MS Access) to store, sort, group, extract, manipulate, and filter data. This type of software is similar to a spreadsheet, but it allows you to use the information in more advanced ways. Consider using database software instead of spreadsheet software when

- there is a very large amount of data (e.g., thousands of entries).
- you need to link two different databases together.
- a unique report is needed to display data.

The Internet
Office professionals frequently conduct research using the Internet. Finding useful information quickly on the Internet is possible when you use the correct search tools and methods.

- *Web Search Engines* are websites designed to locate information on the Internet. Using them is one of the most effective ways to find specific information. When you enter a keyword or phrase into a web search engine, it provides a list of websites relating to that keyword or phrase. Some frequently used web search engines are:

  - Google.com
  - Yahoo.com
  - Ask.com
  - MSN.com

- *Online Encyclopedia/Reference Websites* are other useful tools for conducting online research. Unlike web search engines, online encyclopedia websites are specifically designed to provide factual information on a wide variety of topics. The following are some of the commonly used encylopedias/references websites:

  - Wikipedia.org
  - Thesaurus.com
  - Webster.com
  - Dictionary.com

When conducting an Internet search, always use more than one source. This will help ensure the accuracy of your work as each site may provide different information on the same topic. If you discover a useful website or search engine, you can use the "bookmark" feature in your Internet browser to easily access it again.

Email

Office professionals use email software (e.g., MS Outlook) to send, receive, and store email messages. It also offers functions for tracking work tasks and scheduling meetings and assignment due dates.

Please refer to the *Customer Service Information Guide* for a detailed discussion on the functions of and techniques for email communication.

Section Summary

Office equipment is a vital resource for office professionals. Your work performance can be affected by your knowledge and understanding of the functions of the various office equipment. This section provided an overview of the function of photocopiers, fax machines, scanners, and shredders. Additionally, this section discussed how computers are used in today's office environment.

Conclusion

Developing your understanding of office practices is essential for your success as an office professional. This guide provided an introduction to the guidelines and applications of office practices. It presented a general definition of office practices and strategies for completing assignments, managing time, managing documents, and using office equipment, tools, and resources in the context of an office setting.

Additional Resources

Reading this guide is a first step to helping you develop effective office practices. To help you gain a deeper understanding of office practices, you may consider seeking additional information about the topics presented in this guide. Other resources (e.g., books, workshops, seminars, Internet resources, etc.) are available to expand your understanding of office practices.

Feedback

In order to assist us in enhancing this document, we would greatly appreciate any feedback you would like to provide. Please email any suggestions to testprep@hr.lacounty.gov. In the subject line of your email, please write "Office Practices Guide." Thank you in advance for your response.

Bibliography

This guide was developed based on the education and experience of its authors, along with integrating the knowledge from the source listed below. This guide was developed for an applied setting, and we freely share it with all readers who may be interested in its contents.

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Appendix L

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Guide to Preparing for Your Written Employment Test

Lisa M. Garrett, Director of Personnel

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

Table of Contents

Introduction

The County of Los Angeles Department of Human Resources (DHR) is pleased to offer this ***Guide to Preparing for Your Written Employment Test***. This Guide will help you

- understand the purpose of written tests;
- learn how to prepare for written tests; and
- become familiar with written test administration procedures.

Who Should Use this Guide?

We developed this Guide for anyone who will take a County of Los Angeles written employment test. It might be especially useful for people who have never taken one or for people who have not taken one recently.

Disclaimer

This Guide provides *general information* about County of Los Angeles written tests. Each County department has its own specific procedures for administering written tests. These procedures may be different from what we describe in this Guide.

Also, reading and following the guidelines in this Guide will not guarantee that you will perform well on your written test. You may need to prepare in a different way than the way we describe in this Guide. By merely using this Guide, you acknowledge that you understand and agree with this disclaimer.

General Information About Written Tests

We administer written tests during what we call an *examination*. This is the process of evaluating applicants for a particular job. The *examination analyst* is the person in charge of this process. One of the first steps of the process is for the examination analyst to review your application. If your application shows that you meet certain minimum qualifications, you move on to the next step. Often, this next step is taking a written test.

Why do we conduct written tests?

County of Los Angeles residents expect public jobs to be filled by capable employees. As a job seeker, you expect a fair chance to compete with other job applicants. Written tests are cost-effective and objective ways for us to satisfy both of these expectations.

How do we develop written tests?

We study the job and meet with job experts to ensure that our written tests reflect the knowledge and abilities that employees need to successfully perform the duties of the job. We do not develop written test questions to be unnecessarily difficult or to "trick" you. Rather, the aim is to accurately and fairly assess your qualifications for the job.

Although you will not know exactly what questions will be on the written test, you are in control of how prepared you will be! Proper preparation will help you increase your confidence and allow you to show your qualifications for the job.

How do we administer written tests?*

We administer most written tests in a group setting. This means there will probably be other test-takers in the testing room with you. We also time the written tests. All test-takers will have the same amount of time to complete the written test. Other helpful information is provided below.

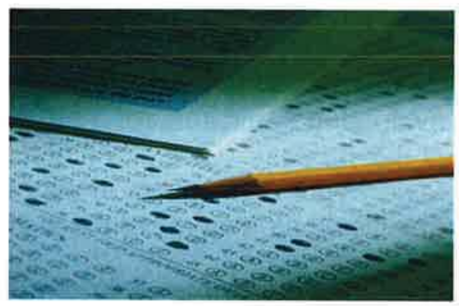
Test Proctor

The test proctor helps the examination analyst administer the written test. At least one test proctor will be in the testing room to check you in, provide instructions for filling out the test forms, tell you about the time limit, and answer questions about testing procedures. The test proctor will also oversee the testing room to help keep distractions like noise to a minimum.

Testing Room

The testing rooms at most County facilities have a classroom setting like the one pictured on the left. Usually, you will not be able to choose your own seat. You will also have to leave any personal items at the front of the room or underneath your seat. This helps to promote the security of the test administration. Before you enter the testing room, you must turn off any devices with sound (for example, cell phones, pagers, watch alarms, etc.) that may distract others.

Test Materials



Most County of Los Angeles written tests have a "booklet" format. You will record your answers on a "fill-in-the-bubble-type" answer sheet similar to the one pictured on the right. You will be able to work through problems either on scratch paper provided by the test proctor or directly on the test booklet. The test proctor will let you know which of these choices is available.

Also, most test questions have a multiple-choice format. This means that you will have a set of possible answer choices for each question, and you will have to select the ONE that you decide is the best response to the question. Examples of this test question format can be found on the Test Preparation System (described on the next page).

Test Confidentiality

Because the County's examination process is competitive, all examination content must remain confidential. You will leave any materials written on or used during the test with the test proctor. Also, you *must not* discuss any of the content of the test with anyone except the examination analyst or an approved representative of human resources. If we find that you have violated these requirements, you may be disqualified from participating in this and any future examination.

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* Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, persons with disabilities who believe they need reasonable accommodation should follow the directions on the *job bulletin* (described on the next page).

Written Test Preparation

Well Before the Test Day

You should begin to prepare for the written test as soon as possible! Studying and making plans for the test day should take place over a significant period of time (for example, a few weeks) rather than all at once the night before the test. We offer three resources to help you do this: the *job bulletin*, your *test notice letter*, and the *Test Preparation System*.

Job Bulletin

The job bulletin is an official document that provides important information about the examination for a particular job. If a written test is part of the examination process, the job bulletin will provide the particular weight (for example, 100%, 50%, 25%, etc.) the written test will have on your overall score for the examination. It will also list the subject areas that the written test will cover. You should use this information to efficiently direct your study efforts. Many written tests cover the subject areas listed below.

- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Interpretation
- Reading Comprehension
- Written Expression

Job bulletins are available on the DHR website (http://hr.lacounty.gov) or at our Employment Information Services Office (3333 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 100, Los Angeles, CA 90010).

*Test Notice Letter**

This letter informs you of the date, time, and location of your written test. We mail it 10 days before the test date to give you time to make plans for your transportation and schedule for that day.

- Transportation – If you will be driving, a test-drive to the facility before your actual test day can help you discover the best route and parking locations and costs, if necessary. If you will be taking public transportation, visit the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (www.metro.net) to help plan your trip.

- Schedule – *Most* tests last about two hours with added time (for example, one hour) for checking-in and providing instructions. You should plan your other activities for the test day accordingly.

The test notice letter will also describe any items (for example, calculators or acceptable forms of photo identification) that you must bring with you to the test.

Test Preparation System (TPS)

The TPS is a series of practice tests and review guides for subjects that many County of Los Angeles written employment tests cover. Research has shown that test takers who used the TPS as part of their study efforts were more confident about their test performance and earned higher scores than those who did not use it. The TPS is available on the DHR website (http://hr.lacounty.gov) by clicking on *Career Opportunities* and then *Employment Test Preparation*.

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* Immediately notify the examination analyst of any changes to your mailing address. Contact information for the examination analyst is listed on the *job bulletin*.

The Night Before the Test Day

- Allow for enough sleep the night before the test date. Proper rest will help you maintain your focus while taking the test.

- Plan what you will wear to the test. Choose comfortable, layered clothing so you will be prepared for any room temperature. If your test notice letter indicated the *possibility* of interviews after the test, you should dress accordingly.

- Ensure that you have your transportation plan and test notice letter – with the materials it says to bring – ready for the next day.

On the Test Day

- Eat a light meal before the test. The written test administration will usually last for several hours, and hunger can be a distraction.

- Bring the required materials that you gathered the night before to the test facility.

- Leave at a time that will allow you to walk from the parking location/public transportation stop, use the rest room, and get a drink of water **before** your scheduled test time.

During the Test

Some mistakes are caused by nervousness rather than lack of preparation. The following suggestions may help you reduce the effect of nervousness on your test performance.

- Before you begin, look over the test and decide how you will approach it. Unless otherwise instructed, you can answer questions in whatever order you prefer (for example, you could start with the questions in the last section instead of the questions in the first section).

- Manage your time. Have a general idea of how much time you need to answer each question. If you find that you are spending too much time on a question, move on to the next question and return to it after you have completed the rest of the test.

- Read the directions carefully so you know how to answer the questions. There may be different directions for different sections of the test.

- Read each question slowly and carefully. Reading too fast may cause you to miss or add words that lead you to choose an incorrect answer.

- Read each question completely. Do not assume that you know what a question is asking after reading the first few words.

- Try to identify the answer before you read the answer choices; however, make sure to read *all* the answer choices before marking your answer on the answer sheet.

- Mark your answers on your answer sheet as you take the test. Though you may be able to write in the test booklet or on scratch paper, your score will *only* be based on what you mark on your answer sheet. Given the time constraints, you should avoid waiting until the last few minutes to transfer answers marked on the test booklet or scratch paper to your answer sheet.

- Periodically check to make sure that your answer sheet responses match to the question you are answering on the test. For example, if you are answering question 15 on the test, make sure that you are marking the space for number 15 on the answer sheet. This is especially important if you skip any questions to come back to later.

- If you change your answer to any question, be sure to erase it *completely* from your answer sheet.

- Do not let early finishers distract you. Everyone has a different test-taking pace and we do not award special points for completing the test first.

- Review your answers after you have completed the test, if time allows. Make sure that you have answered all the questions.

After the Test

After the test, the examination analyst will mail a letter to you with information about your test results and/or the next steps in the examination process*. The time to receive this letter will vary depending on the examination. Candidates who successfully advance through the entire examination process will be placed on an *eligibility list*. The County of Los Angeles can only hire people whose names are on this list. Placement on an eligibility list does *not guarantee* that you will be hired. Instead, County departments will contact individuals from this list when they have a job opening.

* Immediately notify the examination analyst of any changes to your mailing address. Contact information for the examination analyst is listed on the *job bulletin*.

Conclusion

This *Guide* provided you with general information that can help you prepare to take a written employment test at the County of Los Angeles. Proper preparation is the best way to show your qualifications, and we wish you the best in your efforts!

Other Resources

We do not specifically support or recommend any preparation resources beyond this and other guides found on the Test Preparation System. However, if you would like additional test preparation, the following may be helpful.

- California WorkSource centers (http://www.worksourcecalifornia.com), which receive partial funding from the County of Los Angeles, offer many resources to job seekers.

- Colleges and universities often offer career development resources to their students and alumni.

- Local public libraries offer many resources that may help you in your preparation.

Feedback

To help us improve this Guide, we would appreciate your feedback. Please email any suggestions to testprep@hr.lacounty.gov. In the subject line of your email, please write "General Written Test Preparation Guide." Thank you in advance.

Authors

DHR's Test Research Unit is pleased to offer this Guide as part of a series of preparation tools and resources available to individuals proceeding through the County's employment process. Valuable input was provided by each member of our team, the following in particular:

- Erin Schlacks, Human Resources Analyst I
- Angela Hunt, Human Resources Analyst IV
- Marc Shartzer, Principal Analyst

Appendix M

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Introduction to Data Collection

Focusing on the right tools to optimize success

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Table of Contents

Introduction to Data Collection

Welcome to learning about data collection. The County of Los Angeles Department of Human Resources is pleased to offer this information guide. We hope that you find it useful in enhancing your understanding of data collection.

Data has always served to enhance understanding, which enables a decision maker to better choose among many options. From simple to complex decisions, individuals have looked to data to assist them in their decision-making process. Without data, individuals are confronted with having to make decisions at random or only on gut feel. This can lead to ineffective, costly, or less than ideal results or outcomes. Data collection provides a mechanism to gather the raw materials that decision makers rely on to help guide thoughts that can lead to effective conclusions, recommendations, or actions.

Today, organizations rely on massive amounts of data that may be used to help predict the future, report on the past, or indicate what is currently happening. This is fundamental to an organization's ability to operate by reducing risk and promoting accuracy in the actions that are or will be taken. Data serves as the foundation to decision making at all levels of an organization.

Purpose

This guide has been developed to introduce you to the fundamental elements of data collection methods, principles, and techniques. The goals of this guide are to present readers with *general information* covering this subject area and spark interest for further exploration.

Objectives

This guide has been designed to convey to readers an understanding of

- a formal process to data collection.
- how to plan for a research assignment.
- basic types of data collection methods and how to select among them.
- ethical issues involved in data collection.
- principles and guidelines related to developing and implementing data collection methods.

Disclaimer

This guide has been developed to serve as an introduction to data collection methods, principles, and techniques. Though this guide presents useful and practical information on this subject area, there is *no guarantee* that someone who reads this guide will be able to perform better on the job or on a County examination. By merely using this guide, you consent to understanding and agreeing with this disclaimer.

Note: Information in this guide is current as April 2006 and will be updated periodically.

Who should use this guide?
This guide is written for those new to formal data collection activities and for those who need to review and enhance their understanding of data collection. This guide is written for anyone who conducts (or will conduct) focused and directed data collection activities and wants to gain a better understanding of this work.

The material covered in this guide can be challenging. It has been designed to present the information in the most common terms while respecting the research discipline by retaining terminology that will be helpful for all individuals conducting data collection work activities. The material is presented for a business setting and audience.

What is data?
Data can be any piece of *information*. Data can take the form of numbers, text, graphics (charts, tables, pictures, maps, etc.), verbal exchanges (e.g., conversations), etc. In essence, data can be any piece of information that can be conveyed to and understood by someone else.

> *Note: We will use the terms "data" and "information" interchangeably throughout this guide.*

What is data collection?
Data collection has many different definitions. It usually revolves around the purpose of trying to answer a question. Data collection has been described as

- a disciplined journey that seeks answers to a question.
- detective work for fact-finding purposes to acquire truth.
- a unique search to capture information that will assist decision making.
- an exploration that provides meaningful information that helps guide a course of action.
- a planned, rigorous process to collect information on a defined topic under study that will be analyzed and reported to someone.
- a limitless search for solutions to questions that is only constrained by such things as the amount of time and budget available, expertise of researcher, lack of curiosity, etc.

From this brief list of definitions, we can see a general trend toward viewing data collection as a method to gather information to answer a question that helps support decision making.

Formal Definition of Data Collection
We have covered some background information on data collection up to this point. To ensure we move forward with a shared understanding of data collection, we have provided a formal definition that we will use throughout this guide.

Data Collection is a systematic, logical method to collect raw information that accurately and reliably represents the variable(s) or field(s) under study.

Let's break this definition down into its component parts:

- *Systematic, logical method* – data collection relies on a defined, standardized approach of logical rules and procedures to gathering data that can be repeated for more than one data collection session/effort and can be replicated by other researchers.

- *Raw information* – the numerical, textual, graphical, or other data format that is collected by a data collection session/effort is raw and unevaluated or unchanged information that will be cleaned and then analyzed. This raw information can come from data collected by others.

- *Accurately and reliably* – the chosen data collection methods and tools result in capturing data that accurately reflects what is *actually* occurring and does so in a manner that can be consistently found.

- *Variable(s) under study* – a variable is something that can be measured and can take on two or more values. For example,
  - The numerical value reflecting the weight of people is a measurable variable as weight can be two or more values (e.g., Shawn weighs 125 pounds and Kim weighs 156 pounds).
  - Responses to a customer service survey may use a 5-point scale with each customer evaluating the service as:
    5 = exceptional
    4 = good
    3 = average
    2 = poor
    1= awful

- *Field(s) under study* – a field being studied can involve the collection of articles, benchmark studies, case studies, technical reports, or other source materials that report on a specific field (e.g., information technology, engineering, library science, nursing, etc.) or a specific finding or element of a field. Also, unique data collection sessions/efforts on a specific area of a field, such as collecting information via a survey, interview, or observation, can occur when you collect data from individuals.

Goal of Data Collection

The goal of data collection is to provide the best possible data given the constraints (i.e., restrictions) that will enable a decision maker to make the best possible decision.

As a data collector, you are entrusted to gather the best, most accurate, and meaningful data possible (while adhering to ethical standards), and present the data in the most useful manner to the decision maker (requester of the data). The data you will be collecting represents a piece or element of truth – the truth that you are trying to uncover or discover.

The Research Process

In order to carry out data collection in a systematic manner, a research process is followed. In this guide, we will discuss an eight-step research process that provides a framework to conducting research assignments. This process assists in planning a research assignment and increases the likelihood that an assignment will result in favorable outcomes (e.g., provides useful answers). Data collection is only part of the research process. However, in order to get to the data collection steps, a great deal of planning and understanding must occur.

The eight steps are

1. Receive the research assignment
2. Define the research problem/situation
3. Determine the research design
4. Determine the data collection tool
5. Develop a data collecting tool(s)
6. Collect data
7. Analyze data
8. Develop communication tool

These eight steps do not represent the only approach to conducting research. Depending on your research assignment, you may not need to perform all eight of them, or you may perform all eight but not to the extent we discuss in this guide. The needs of your individual research assignment will guide your decision making.

To maintain the focus of this guide, only the first five steps will be discussed in detail. The remaining three steps will be briefly summarized.

1. Receive the Research Assignment

Often, work-related research begins with an assignment from your supervisor. He/she has a problem that requires information to help guide his/her decision-making or to present to others. This first step is a chance for you to gain a general understanding of the assignment and what is expected of you.

When you meet with your supervisor, he/she may be able to readily present information about the assignment. However, when the assignment is given to you, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have all the *necessary* information you need to successfully complete your research assignment. This is your first step in the data collection process.

Here are a few questions that will help guide you during this step. Your supervisor may already provide answers without you questioning, but you will most likely have to ask a few follow-up questions to clarify what he/she means. Each assignment is different, so some of these questions may not be applicable and other questions specific to the assignment may need to be asked. Make sure you take notes!

Questions that will help you gain a general understanding of the assignment include:

- What is the assignment?
- What is the goal of the assignment?
- What is the problem/situation that the research assignment is trying to answer?
- When does the assignment need to be completed?
- What format will the information need to be in for submission (e.g., report, brief discussion, presentation, etc.)?
- Who will use the information that is produced from this research (i.e., intended audience)?
- Has anyone in the organization conducted similar work that I might be able to review and build upon?
- What resources may I use to complete this assignment (e.g., how many hours can I work, what equipment can I use, what other employees of the department/unit may I talk with, do I have a budget, are other staff members going to assist me, etc.)?
- Can I get in contact with individuals outside of the department/work unit (e.g., other department staff, members of community organizations, vendors, etc.) through appropriate methods (in-person, phone, email, posting on a listserve, etc.)?
- Can we meet to clarify my understanding of this assignment and allow me the opportunity to present my plan after I have conducted some preliminary work?

  Note: Set a date to meet even if it is a temporary or tentative date. This will give you a target to meet, and it will reserve a time with your supervisor.

Make sure to always ask, "Is there anything else you think I should know that would help me successfully complete this assignment?

The information collected at this step will provide a general overview of the assignment along with some constraints (e.g., restrictions such as timeframe, specification of the work product, resources allocated, etc.) that will guide what you can and cannot do. The next few steps of the research process will help you begin to shape what you will actually do.

> *Note: If the assignment does not seem "doable" within the timeframe along with balancing your other work assignments, make sure to inform your supervisor and ask for guidance. The first step in taking on an assignment is to determine if it can be done within the constraints. Each supervisor is different with different working styles. You will have to determine how best to present your concerns, but it is better to state them upfront then to fail to deliver your assignment later.*

2. Define Research Problem/Situation

From the information that you collected in Step 1, you can begin to determine what the research question is. Essentially, the research question is a question that *summarizes/states what you are trying to answer with your research.* The question to ask is, "What is the problem or situation I am trying to find answers or solutions to?" Furthermore, the research question serves as an overarching guide to what you will do throughout your research activities (i.e., a purpose statement).

Here are a few examples of research questions:

- What are the three professional associations in our field that have the largest membership and hold conferences that our staff can attend?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of sending our staff through the training program?
- Is our organization at a disadvantage because we did not update our database system to the latest version?
- What are the top five software products that best meet our needs based on specification, cost, maintenance, implementation timeframe, compatibility with our current system, time to learn, customer service, and other relevant factors.
- How are new laws and/or regulations that are going to be put into effect within the next six months going to influence the way we should perform our work?

  Note: These statements are written in the most general way possible to make them applicable to the widest audience. For your assignment, you should include as much specific information as possible in your research question, such as software program types, areas of law, areas of training, etc.

Depending on the complexity of your research assignment, the data collected in Step 1 may have provided all the information you need to develop your research question. However, for more complex assignments or ones where you know little on the topic, you may need to collect some general information to help you fully understand what you are trying to accomplish. For these assignments, you will conduct *some* preliminary research. The data you collect at this point will provide a foundational understanding of your assignment that can be built upon when you conduct more in-depth research.

Preliminary research usually relates to data that you can gather quickly and easily. This means that you will most likely rely on Internet searches for articles, product reviews, reports, professional publications, etc. You may conduct brief interviews with staff or other individuals outside your department that are informed on the topic. The goal here is to

- gain a general understanding of your topic.
- review what others have done so you do not duplicate work that has already been accomplished.
- help you understand and hopefully avoid the mistakes made by others.

- put your assignment in the context of the work that has already been completed in order to determine how your work may add to the work that has already been completed (i.e., advancing the understanding on the topic).
- help to spark ideas on how you can better provide information to answer the problem posed by your supervisor.

Note: Sensitive topics such as health and safety require more care and may need more in-depth research at all steps, including your preliminary research work.

Tips to develop your research question:

- Write a formal research question even if you are documenting what your supervisor told you during your meeting. This will solidify what your research goal is.
- Understand that there is no one absolute best way to state your research question. However, your research question needs to convey the same meaning when read by both you and whomever you are working with to complete the assignment (e.g., your supervisor). This shared understanding of what you are trying to answer is essential to planning a research endeavor.
- Write a clear and thoughtful research question that appropriately encompasses the main point of what you are trying to answer.
- Determine if your research topic is a broad or narrow topic area or a broad or narrow *aspect* of a topic area. This will be reflected in your research question and the research you conduct. Broad topic areas or broad aspects of a topic area are more general in nature, so your research assignment would relate to a general, overview understanding. On the other hand, narrow topic areas or narrow aspects of a topic area are more specific in nature, so your research assignment would relate to a deeper understanding of a defined topic area.
- Ask yourself, "Will answering this research question get at the root cause of the problem I am trying to answer?" If it does not, modify the question and focus on what is the true goal of the work you are conducting. This may involve a meeting with your supervisor to ensure he/she agrees.
- Make sure your research question is not a data collection question. The data collection question only deals with how the data will be collected whereas the research question directly relates to what the research is trying to answer.

Like with other design-related endeavors, planning a research effort can be an iterative process that involves repeating steps while you refine your search strategies and learn more about your topic.

3. Determine the Research Design

Now that you have defined the question you are trying to answer, the next step is developing a plan on how you are going to answer it. The research design acts like a blueprint or path for you to follow when you conduct your actual research activities. The goal of this step is to determine the plan of the research activities and the methods you will employ.

Because there are many possible ways to carry out your research, you will have many decisions to make. Always remember your goal is to collect the best possible data that will enable a decision maker (e.g., your supervisor) to make the best possible decision. While doing this you must balance answering the research question, considering the constraints (e.g., restrictions such as timeframe, specification of the work product, resources allocated, etc.), and understanding the overall goals of what the research needs to provide. The interaction of these pieces of information will help guide the decisions you have to make to determine the best research plan given the challenges you have to complete the assignment.

The first question to ask is, "What data will provide the best information to answer my research question given the constraints I have to work within?" Answering this question will help you focus in on what data you need, such as numerical, textual, graphical (charts, tables, pictures, maps, etc.); verbal exchanges (e.g., conversations); etc. You may need multiple data formats to best answer your research question. Exploring the different data collection methods and tools that you can use to collect your data will also influence your decision. *The next section of this document (pages 15-48) provides an in-depth explanation of data collection methods and tools for you to use to develop your research plan. We recommend that you continue reading the remaining steps of the research process to get a general understanding of the research process. You may want to revisit this section after reading the entire guide.*

> *Note: Determining the data you need and data collection methods go hand-in-hand. They do not need to be thought about as two separate sequential steps but more of an interlocking decision. The idea here is for you to focus on what data format you need and which data collection method will be the best one to provide this data given the constraints of your research effort. Your constraints will most likely influence which data collection method you use and how much data you will collect.*

In developing your research plan, you will not only select a data collection tool, but also determine how much data you collect. This decision relates to sampling. Once again, the constraints of your work assignment along with the advantages and disadvantages of each of the data collection tools will help you determine your sampling activities.

Sampling
A *sample* is a portion or subset of a larger group with the intended goal that the sample will adequately represent the larger group. The larger group is called a *population* which is everyone or every item/unit that could be included in the grouping. For example, the grouping could be based on every

- contract over $10,000.
- building that is less than 25,000 square feet.
- employee with 10 or more years of work experience.
- professional conference held in the Los Angeles region.
- employee who completed a four module training program.
- software program that received a superior rating by an independent agency.

Groups can be people, objects, events, or other items of interest or importance to the study. As you can see from the examples, a sample can be *individuals* or *units* of objects/events.

Sampling is the process of determining the number of participants (e.g., individuals) or units and selecting the ones that will mirror or represent the population. Sampling enables us to measure a *variable* (i.e., something that can be measured and can take on two or more values) with a subset or smaller number (i.e., a portion) than all possible measures of the population. The challenge is to be able to select the right sample to enable the findings to be generalized to the entire population and reduce the error in your research findings that were due to the sample you used.

For example, you find 100 articles on a topic and only read the first 10 that you find. Is this sample adequate to give you a good understanding of the topic? If the 10 articles you choose only cover a small portion of the topic then you could misunderstand or misrepresent what the topic is. The right sample will provide you with a representative sample of the whole group (or in this case a good representation of the body of information on the topic). A sample is determined to be representative if it has the same or very similar characteristics of the population from which it was selected.

> *Note: A representative sample can be thought of as a measure of quality. A quality sample will provide you with the right information to assist you in meeting your research goals as it provides an accurate reflection of the population from which it was drawn.*

Sampling advantages include the following:

- less expensive (conducting 20 customer interviews is cheaper than conducting 100).
- less time to conduct the work and less time to turn around a result, especially if the data collected is time sensitive.
- more time for the researcher to focus on developing a stronger data collection tool.
- fewer individuals of the population are required to spend their time and energy in participating in the data collection effort.

Sampling Designs

There are many sampling designs and each provides different options on how to select a subset of the population. Using the information you have already collected about your work assignment will help guide you in identifying the appropriate sampling design. We present five of these design options below. They are presented from the least to most rigorous (i.e., more difficult to implement while having the greatest likelihood of producing a representative sample).

- Convenient Sampling – participants/units are selected because they are easily found and are available (e.g., people in your office or the first few documents that result from an Internet search). This is a quick and easy process, but the results are less likely to be representative of the population under study. It can still be useful depending on the goals of your research assignment.

- Purposive Sampling – participants/units that are judged (determined) to be appropriate based on desired characteristics or would be particularly informative on the topic being researched. This is a rational approach where the participants/units are handpicked from the larger group (population) based on a targeted profile or characteristic(s) to be included in the study.

- Systematic Sampling – participants/units are selected in a systematic but not random way. For example, selecting every eighth person who signs up for a training program or every sixth result from an Internet search. This technique is useful as it is easy to implement while still adding some element of randomness to your selection process. Random selection usually helps to ensure a representative sample is selected.

- Simple Random Sampling – every participant/unit of a population has an equal and independent chance of being selected, and they are selected based on a random selection method. This means that a computer software program is used to randomly identify a sample of the participants/units in the population under study based on the number or percent of participants/units you need. For example, if we needed 15% of employees who attended a training session to evaluate how effective the training was to helping them improve their actual job performance, we would use a software program to randomly select 15% of the entire population (i.e., everyone who took the training class). The result would be a list of individuals that were randomly selected with each having an equal chance of being included in the evaluation.

  This is a more rigorous sampling technique as you have to rely on a software program to assist you in identifying the sampling. However, this sampling design usually results in a representative sample that will help to strengthen the accuracy of your research findings.

- Stratified Random Sampling – is a sampling approach where the population is divided into subgroups called *strata* (the strata would be determined by the needs of your study). From each strata, a random sampling is selected. For example, we may need to select 10% of the residents from each region of the County of Los Angeles based on area code. Area code would be the strata or sub-groupings that have divided the residents of the County of Los Angeles. Next, a sample would be selected from each strata based on a simple random sampling design.

Sample Size

A question that always comes up is "How much data do I need to collect?". "It depends" is the usual reply – a response that is not as clear cut as most would like. There are many factors to consider that influence the size of the sample you need (i.e., the constraints of your assignment). For example, a general understanding of a topic may require an Internet search and may only require a sample of five or six documents to be read. On the other hand, a complex research assignment on the legal updates in a particular area of law may include a larger sample of documents to be read, such as the actual law, related laws, legal interpretations, other relevant professional opinions from other fields, etc.

The goal with sampling is to ensure that you are able to collect enough data that you have confidence in your findings. That is, you feel that the sample adequately represents the population. There are statistical approaches to determine sample size, but generally speaking, the larger the sample the better. The data collection tool you use will influence the sample you select. In addition, the availability of participants or units may influence how you sample.

When collecting data using participants, a consideration needs to be made based on the expected *response rate* (i.e., the number of participants in the sample who respond out of the number that were invited). For example, if 100 individuals were selected to participate in a survey and 35 responded, then the response rate would be 35% (35/100). Determining your sample size can be influenced by your expected response rate (i.e., lower expected response rates can be offset by having a larger sample size).

> *Note: The rule of thumb is, "The larger the sample, the more likely you will have accurate findings."*

4. Determine the Data Collection Method

Once again, the research question, constraints, and goals of the research assignment guide this step of the process as they interact to serve as driving agents in determining the data collection tool you use. This means any one of these three driving factors can influence which data collection tool you ultimately use. In reality, the same research question can result in using very different data collection tools due to different constraints or study goals. For example, a research assignment that has a constraint of a shorter time to complete along with the goal of writing a report on general findings of a topic would result in the use of data collection tool(s) that collects data faster and provides an overview of the topic under study.

On the other hand, a research assignment that has the constraints of producing a well documented, thoroughly studied topic that needs to be completed within a year would result in a complex research design resulting in a detailed and well-thought-out analysis and report.

However, no matter what data collection tool you use, it needs to be a reliable data collection method. Meaning, one that is relatively free from what is referred to as measurement error. *Measurement error* is where the true findings are obscured or covered up by error or "slop" in the measure. This error results in less accurate findings that may negatively effect the resulting decisions that are made based on your research findings.

Here are some examples of error or "slop" in the measure that can occur:

Issue	Explanation/Examples
Poorly designed questions	Questions that • can be interpreted many different ways • ask two questions instead of one clear, focused question • are written at a reading level that is too high/difficult (e.g., using vocabulary or technical terms the reader most likely would not know)
Inappropriate sampling	Sampling that does not adequately represent the population under study.
Non-standardized data collection practice	Such as: • changing the order of the questions for an interview so each interviewee may be asked the questions in a different order • rewording the questions asked during an interview • changing the procedures used to collect data from day-to-day • using different data collection locations that could influence the results

At the end of Step 4 and definitely after Step 5, you will want to hold a meeting with your supervisor to ensure that your understanding of the assignment and what you are planning to accomplish is in keeping with his/her expectations. Be ready to present all the information you have collected, including the information you collected during the initial meeting where your supervisor gave you the assignment. Be prepared to present and discuss your research question, preliminary research, and the research design you plan on following, including the data collection tools you plan on using and developing (if needed). This meeting will allow for a chance to clarify the assignment expectations and give you an opportunity to present your plan on how to successfully accomplish the assignment.

5. Develop a Data Collection Method/Tool

Depending on your research question, data collection question, and constraints, you may or may not need to develop a *primary* data collection tool such as a survey, interview, or guidelines/script for conducting a focus group (i.e., you directly collect the data from individuals). Instead, you could use a *secondary* data collection tool, such as using an Internet search engine to find a published report. One of the main differences between a primary and secondary data collection effort is the complexity of the data collection tool. The search terms you may type into a search engine can quickly be modified, and you have real-time and absolute control over this data collection action. Whereas, the use of a survey cannot be changed quickly and the individual who is completing it has control over how they respond.

Always remember, when thinking about collecting data in any form, you must think about not only how the data will be collected, but also how it will be analyzed to provide the *evidence* needed to support an answer for your research question. In addition, you must consider the format in which the data should be collected so that it will be displayed in the most useful manner for the targeted reader. Lastly, consider how the data will be stored for current and future retrieval and to ensure the data is secured.

6. Collect Data

This is the step where you put your data collection plan into action. This may involve the collection of documents on the Internet, posting a question on a listserve/blog, or administering a survey to a targeted sample of individuals. The data collection step is where you actually collect the raw material/information that will be analyzed to respond to your research question.

7. Analyze Data

Analyzing your data is the step where you sift through the raw material/information you collected in the previous step and begin to shape it into a format that can be used to answer your research question. This is the step where you will compile your findings and draw out some meaning.

8. Develop Communication Tool

Most research assignments result in a written report or oral presentation of the findings. The goal of this step of the research process is to take all the work you have accomplished and present the essential elements that address the research question and assignment goals in a useful format for the targeted reader (e.g., your supervisor). The format, length, reading level, etc. of the document will be determined by your research goals and anticipated current and future use of the report/presentation.

For example, if the goal is to present a written report covering the general findings to your supervisor, then the report would most likely be shorter and would summarize your results. However, if the goal is to document a research assignment that collected customer service evaluations that would be repeated every year, then the report would document the entire research process in a detailed, step-by-step manner for you or someone else to replicate it in order to update your findings. This would result in a longer report.

Your documentation can serve as a resource for someone else researching the topic. Sharing your findings is a helpful way to pass on the information and insight you gained. Ultimately, this on-going sharing helps save time and money of future research efforts while supporting the expansion of knowledge.

Summary

This section provided an introduction to data collection and described an eight-step research process that can be applied to your research assignments. The next section of this guide will focus on the actual data collection methods and tools you will use to conduct your research. This section will take you on a tour of data collection methods and tools and applied procedures to carrying out your data collection efforts.

Overview of Data Collection Methods & Tools

As part of the research process, you will choose the particular data collection method(s) and tool(s) to use in your research assignment. The data collection method is specifically *how* you will gather accurate and reliable information relevant to the research questions and goals and within the constraints of the assignment.

The goal for this section is for you to gain an understanding of the

- basic types of data collection methods.
- factors to consider when selecting a data collection method/tool.
- ethical issues involved in data collection.
- basic principles for developing data collection methods.
- procedural considerations related to data collection methods.

Basic Types of Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods can be placed into four major categories:

- Document Reviews
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Observations

We'll describe the categories and discuss the specific tools within each.

Document Reviews

The most common data collection method used in the workplace is the document review, which involves collecting *secondary source information* (i.e., existing documents or data that were originally written or collected by someone else).

Why collect information using a document review?
The information collected in a document review can provide background information to familiarize you with the topic area. It can also lead you to additional research questions, which may result in using other data collection methods.

Examples of research questions where the document review is a useful data collection method include the following:

- How do the procurement practices compare among similar organizations?
- What is the historical and current use of the automated client management system within the department?

- What are the underlying principles of project management and how could it be applied in our organization?

Document reviews are conducted by using *document review sources* (i.e., any location – physical or electronic – that stores information or any object that supplies information). For document reviews, the most common sources are

- Internet searches.
- archival sources.
- benchmark & case studies.
- professional publications.

We'll examine each type of document review source: *what* it is, *why* collect information using it, and *how* to collect the information from it.

Internet Searches

Among the document review sources, Internet searches are becoming the most common. Internet searches refer to any secondary source information found using the Internet and its various *search engines* (i.e., a program designed to help find information on the Internet).

Why collect information from an Internet search?

An Internet search is likely the fastest and most convenient way to collect information because of the use of Internet technology and search engines. Via the Internet, you have the potential for immediate access to hundreds of sources. Typical examples are summarized below.

Source	**Description**
Websites of Organizations	Documents (e.g., reports, summary statistics, and commentaries) may be available through the websites of various organizations (e.g., local governments, universities/colleges, service organizations, professional associations, private companies, etc.).
Internet Forums	A forum is a location on the Internet where people can participate in discussions on a topic area (e.g., music, healthcare, law enforcement). The forum itself is typically organized around the topic area. You must periodically visit the site to check for new discussion topics.
Listserves	Listserves are electronic mailing lists that may be organized by a professional organization or grouped by topic area (e.g., music, healthcare, law enforcement). Listserves are often used to share information with its subscribers or hold discussions among subscribers on aspects of a topic area. On the site, a person receives an email whenever subscribers post new information.

Source	Description
Internet Blogs	Blogs are websites that are typically created by a single person who focuses on providing information on a topic area (e.g., politics, local news, health). Information found on blogs may include technical information, commentaries, images, and links to other data sources. Content found on blogs must be analyzed critically as it is generally not reviewed by other individuals before being made available. You will have to evaluate the author's credentials and his/her quality of writing.
Newspapers and Magazines	Newspaper and magazine articles provide news, commentaries, and other information on a topic area. Many articles are available online for free. Often times, access to archived articles requires payment or a subscription fee.
Bibliographic Databases	Bibliographic databases provide access to article summaries and book titles usually found in research libraries. In many cases, short article summaries (i.e., abstracts) are available for free. Viewing full articles may require payment or subscription fees.

How to collect information from an Internet search
If you know the specific website address of the information source, enter the address in the Internet browser's address field and begin your search within the source.

However, most initial Internet searches will involve the use of a *search engine* (i.e., a program designed to help find information on the Internet). Two of the most commonly used search engines are www.google.com and www.yahoo.com.

With your research question and assignment goals in mind, use the following steps to conduct a basic Internet search using a search engine:

1. *Create a list of search terms* – Search terms are key words and phrases that relate to the research question and goals and are used to find links to websites that contain the desired information. Your list may also include the names of specific data sources for which you do not know the website address.

   Note: Creating a list of search terms is a continuous process. Like detective work, you may find information that leads to other sources of information or new search terms to use. Record this information on your list for current and future use.

2. *Enter search term(s) into the search field* – Some search terms may be meaningful enough to enter by themselves to begin your search. In most cases, you will need to combine terms in a logical way in order to obtain relevant results. To achieve this result, use the following search symbols when entering your search terms in the search field. These symbols are recognized by most of the major search engines.

Search Symbol	Command/Definition	Example	Explanation
+ (plus sign)	Find pages that have all the terms entered.	public +policy +health	Finds pages that have all the terms: "public", "policy", and "health".
- (minus sign)	Find pages that have one term on them but not the other term.	community –housing	Finds pages with the term "community" but not the term "housing".
" " (quotation marks)	Find pages where the terms appear in the exact order you specify within the quotation marks.	"public policy"	Finds pages with the complete phrase: "public policy".

3. *Search the result page(s)* – Results are typically listed in numerical order, which does not imply any level of quality or relevance. You must be prepared to spend time searching for the desired information on each resulting link and possibly on multiple pages of results. In addition, a link may not immediately direct you to the information you seek; you will have to understand each website's layout and navigation to find the information you need.

4. *Refine the search, as necessary* – Often times, there are far too many results to conduct an efficient review, or the results do not seem relevant. Two basic strategies you can use to refine the search results are:

   - Re-think your search term list – You could seek advice from co-workers or others who are experienced with the research question and goals on additional words or phrases that may be added to, removed from, or modified on the search term list. You could also change the order of the search terms when you enter them in the search field, which may yield different results.

   - Use the search engine's advanced search function – Search engines have advanced search functions but vary on specific search capabilities. In most cases, the advanced search function will allow you to search for exact phrases, exclude certain phrases, and filter results based on a criterion, such as:

     - domain extensions (e.g., .com, .org, .net).
     - file type (e.g., .pdf, .xls, .doc).
     - language it was written (e.g., English, Spanish, Chinese).
     - date (e.g., last 3 months, last 6 months, last 12 months, within specific dates).

5. *Document the results of the Internet search* – When you find the desired information, document the results by performing any of the following:

- print hard copies of the document/data.
- save the documents/data to your computer hard drive, if possible.
- copy and paste the information onto a word processing document (e.g., Microsoft Word).
- save the website addresses for future review. *Remember that websites can be removed by their owners at any time without warning.*

Archival Sources

Archival sources consist of any existing documents, records, or data that are either found within the organization or were collected by other organizations, such as

- other local government agencies (e.g., city, county, or state).
- agencies that provide similar or complementary services (e.g., health agencies, schools, community organizations, etc.).
- agencies that have similar functions (e.g., procurement, payroll, human resources, etc.).

Archival sources may include, but are not limited to,

- documented mission and vision statements.
- departmental policy and procedures.
- memoranda and other correspondences (e.g., emails).
- training manuals.
- electronic data and records (e.g., case files).
- data stored in old software systems that may not be current.
- public relation materials.
- press releases.
- narrative and statistical reports (e.g., demographic data, data about a city neighborhood).
- public records.

Why collect information from archival sources?

Archival sources may serve several useful purposes depending on the research question and goals. Examples include the following:

- highlight or uncover a potential problem with an existing work process.
- gain historical insight on a proposed training topic (e.g., the organizational context for the training).
- find out if a similar research assignment has been conducted before and if so, what has been already collected.
- collect existing demographic data about the community that will receive services from a new departmental program.

How to collect information from archival sources
Basic strategies used to collect archival sources include

- seeking advice from supervisors, co-workers, or others who may know where relevant documents/data are stored or if they exist.
- searching your department/section/unit's centralized library or storage area of information, if one exists.
- conducting an Internet search (see previous section on how to conduct an Internet search).
- contacting representatives from other agencies.

Benchmark & Case Studies
Benchmark and case studies provide information that relates to a specific workplace practice, process, or function. A benchmark study collects and analyzes information from multiple organizations, while a case study collects and analyzes information from a single organization.

Why collect information from benchmark and case studies?
Benchmark and case studies are most useful when an organization wants to

- gain insight on how other organizations operate.
- understand how it compares to similar organizations.
- decide whether improvements need to be made within the organization.

Examples of benchmark or case studies include information related to

- the effectiveness of practices or approaches to providing a mental health service.
- information technology systems used to store, process, and report client data.
- policies and implementation practices related to dress code.

How to collect information from benchmark and case studies
There exist companies whose purpose is to conduct benchmark and case studies or continuously collect data for such studies. Companies may make the reports available for free or for purchase. Companies may also make the reports available on the Internet.

Note: You may also conduct your own benchmark or case study by using additional data collection methods, such as interviews and surveys (these methods are discussed in later sections of this information guide).

Professional Publications
Professional publications present research studies, articles, and reports within a specific industry (e.g., construction, education, social services, consumer affairs, etc.) or field (e.g., legal, healthcare, social work, engineering, etc.). Professional publications include journals, magazines, books, and newsletters issued by a professional organization or association.

Why collect information from professional publications?

Among document review sources, professional publications *generally* provide the most accurate and reliable information. Before it is published, a professional article usually goes through a formal review process conducted by other experts in the field. This practice promotes a satisfactory level of accuracy, objectivity, and quality on the information being conveyed – standards that are set forth by the publication. The more information you can find out about the publication's review process, the better decision you can make about the quality of the articles the publication produces.

How to collect information from professional publications?

Professional publications may be accessed via the Internet or are available at local public or college/university libraries. Once you find an article, you can identify other potential articles or other sources (e.g., organizations or experts) that have been referenced by the original article.

Realize that there are usually subscription costs associated with professional publications. Although some publications may be available to the public for free, others require a subscription fee whether it is available as a print copy or on the Internet.

Choosing a Document Review Source

Choosing the document review source to collect data from depends on the research questions and goals. In fact, you are encouraged to seek information from multiple sources whenever possible. Each type of source has its advantages and challenges, which are summarized in the table below.

Type of Source	Advantages	Challenges
Internet Searches	• Potential for collecting large quantities of data in a short period of time. • Access to information includes international sources.	• Less control over quality of data. • May be time-consuming to review all collected data for relevance and quality.
Archival Sources	• Potential for collecting large quantities of data in a short period of time. • Provides historical context for your research assignment.	• Access to information may be difficult. • No control over quality of data.
Benchmark and Case Studies	• Potential for an immediate collection of useful information. • Can compare your organization with other similar organizations.	• Access to information may be difficult depending on the willingness of the organization that produced the study to share the information. • May require fees to access the information.
Professional Publications	• Generally provides most reliable and accurate information among secondary sources.	• May require expertise in subject area in order to interpret content. • May require subscription fees to access publications.

Interviews
The interview is the most common data collection method used to collect *primary source information* (i.e., any information that you collect or produce specifically for your research assignment). An interview is a purposeful conversation between you and the participant(s). The conversation is driven by the use of questions that produce responses that are related to the research questions and goals.

Why collect information using the interview?
Interviews are ideal for collecting detailed and descriptive information directly from the participants that you can use to describe the responses of the interviewees and identify general response themes.

Examples of research questions where the interview is a useful data collection method include the following:

- What improvements to a training program can be implemented?
- What types of problems have employees experienced when providing social services to clients?
- What are the challenges to successfully implement a new departmental policy and procedure?

How to collect information using an interview
Prior to interviewing the participants, you will need to prepare a set of interview questions designed to produce responses from the participant that will provide you information to answer the research questions. During the interview, you will ask each question and record the participant's responses. Throughout the interview, you may ask additional questions (often referred to as *probing questions*) in order for participants to elaborate on their responses, clarify their responses, or be re-directed towards answering the question. Generally, interviews may be conducted by using the following tools:

<u>Personal Interview</u> – A personal interview is a one-on-one, directed conversation that occurs face-to-face with an individual.

<u>Telephone Interview</u> – A telephone interview is a one-on-one, directed conversation with an individual that occurs over the telephone.

<u>Focus Group</u> – A focus group is a face-to-face interview with a group of individuals (typically ranging from 2-12 individuals). Individuals within a focus group usually share a common characteristic (e.g., all hold the same job title) but may provide different perspectives and information during a directed, moderated, and interactive group discussion.

Surveys
A survey is an approach that gathers primary source information by presenting a series of questions to be answered in a pre-arranged order. Surveys use questions that produce responses that are related to the research questions and goals and within the constraints of your assignment. Surveys are often self-administered (i.e., completed by the participant with little to no interaction with the researcher).

Why collect information using the survey?
Surveys are ideal for collecting a large amount of information directly from participants. Information gathered through a survey can be easily analyzed, which allows you to summarize the responses of the participant and draw out other meaningful information.

Examples of research questions where the survey is a useful data collection method include the following:

- What is the demographic data that describes the target sample of participants?
- To what extent were participants satisfied with the training program they attended?
- How has the level of satisfaction with a program changed over time?

How to collect information using a survey
A survey involves the development of questions designed to produce responses from the participant that will provide you with information that answers your research questions. Surveys collect information by using the following tools:

Hardcopy Survey – A hardcopy survey is delivered to participants either in-person or by mail.

- When delivered in-person, you schedule participants to come to your facility or large conference room to complete the survey. Responses may be recorded on the survey itself or on a separate form (e.g., scantron sheet).
- When delivered by mail, the participants complete it and return it to you by mail. Responses may be recorded on the survey itself or on a separate form (e.g., a scantron sheet).

Electronic Survey – An electronic survey is delivered to participants by electronic means, which include any of the following:

- Participants come to a computer facility and complete the survey on a computer terminal.
- Participants complete the survey via the Internet (usually referred to as a *web-based survey*). Participants are notified via email as to the survey's website address and are given login and password information to access and complete the survey.

- Participants receive the survey via email as an attachment. In this case, the survey may either (a) remain in its electronic form and participants record their responses and return the completed survey electronically, or (b) be printed as a hardcopy survey and participants complete it and return it in-person or by mail.

Observation

The least common data collection method to collect primary source information is observation. Observation involves gathering information directly from the participant(s) by watching and recording their actions, behaviors, and conduct in their natural settings (e.g., an employee performing tasks in a warehouse). Observation may also involve visually assessing a particular work environment or process (e.g., the steps involved in processing a benefits claim).

Why collect information using the observation?
Observations are useful in helping to understand how people behave in certain situations by watching the people's *actual* behaviors. This method of data collection allows you to study how participants interact in their natural settings or how a particular work process functions in an actual setting.

Examples of research questions where observation is a useful data collection method include the following:

- How do social workers interact with clients when providing social services within a regional office?
- What kind of work environment does an employee work in while performing carpentry tasks?
- What are the potential risks for accidents in a department's warehousing operations?

Generally, there are two types of observation tools. The basic difference between the two is how you are involved in the observation.

Personal Observation
In a personal observation, you watch the participant(s) and do not actively interact with the participant(s). You take notes on what you observe. However, it is important to understand that the mere presence of the observer may influence the actions of the observed. Observations may be conducted in a

- natural setting, where people may or may not know they are being observed.
- defined research setting, where the natural setting is replicated and people know they are being observed.

Participant Observation
In a participant observation, you observe <u>and</u> participate in the natural setting, interact with the participant(s), and record their actions, behaviors, and conduct. As the researcher, you are both a participant in the situation being studied and an observer of the situation.

Note: Of the two types of observation, personal observation is the most common type used in a workplace setting. Therefore, the remaining sections of this guide will refer only to the personal observation.

Summary
There are many data collection methods and tools you can use to collect information that are relevant to your research questions and goals and within the constraints of your assignment. After understanding which data collection methods are available to you, an important next step is actually choosing which method(s) and tool(s) to use. The next section will discuss the factors to consider when deciding which data collection method(s) and tool(s) is most appropriate to answer your research questions.

Selecting a Data Collection Method/Tool

Remember that your goal in data collection is to gather enough accurate and relevant information within the constraints of your assignment that will enable a supervisor to make a sound, effective decision. A number of factors must be considered when deciding which data collection method/tool(s) to use in order to achieve your goal.

It is important to note that *no one data collection method/tool is ideal for every situation* nor *will any one factor determine the most appropriate method/tool*. You must consider all the relevant factors together when deciding which ones to employ.

When choosing among data collection method/tools, consider the following factors:

- Research questions and goals
- Participant/unit sample
- Response rates, time, & cost
- Research experience
- Quality of data

This section will provide a brief explanation of each factor and make comparisons among the data collection method/tools. At the end of this section, a table that summarizes the preferred data collection tool based on each factor is provided.

Research Questions and Goals

The first and foremost factors to consider when choosing a data collection method are the research questions and goals – the reasons why you are collecting data. Your research questions and goals will generate specific *data collection questions* (i.e., questions that direct you towards the specific types of information you need to collect) that help you decide which data collection method to choose. Particular data collection methods are suited to provide certain types of information.

Here's an illustration of how the research questions and goals generate data collection questions, which leads to selecting a data collection method and to specific information that is collected.

An Illustration

Let's say your department administers a job placement assistance program to the local community.

Research question: What do participants of the job assistance program think about the various aspects of the program?

Data Collection Question	Potential Data Collection Method	Potential Data Collected
What is the program's mission and goals, and how is the program supposed to be implemented?	Document Review	Print or electronic copies of the program's mission and goals statements, and the program's policy and procedures manual.
What are the experiences of the participants who received assistance from the program?	Interview	Written notes describing stories, thoughts, and experiences as told by a sample of participants of the program.
To what extent are participants satisfied with the assistance they receive from the program?	Survey	Raw numerical data measuring the participants' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the program.
What is the quality of the interaction between the employees of the job placement assistance program and the participants?	Observation	Written notes describing the behaviors exhibited by the employees while they interact with the participants.

The above illustration shows how one research question can generate multiple data collection questions, which leads to several options on how to collect the data. It is important to note, however, that one data collection method can provide information that answers several data collection questions. For this reason, you should consider additional factors to determine the most appropriate data collection method(s) to use.

Participant/Unit Sample

There are specific characteristics of the participant/unit sample that may affect your choice of a data collection method/tool. These factors are (1) Sample Size, (2) Location of Participants/Units, and (3) Participant Skills. Each factor is briefly explained below.

Sample Size
Sample size refers to the number of participants or units of information you need in order to be satisfied that you collected enough information that will result in relevant findings (i.e., accurate and reliable). For our purposes, we will define sample size ranges as follows:

- Small – 1 to 10 participants/units.
- Medium – 11 to 15 participants/units
- Large – 15 or more participants/units.

Particular data collection methods/tools are more effective than others when considering the target sample size. That is, particular data collection method/tools may be more effective when used to collect information from a small sample than a large sample. These differences in sample size should be taken into account when choosing a data collection method/tool.

Location of Participants/Units
Location of Participants/Units refers to the physical location(s) of the participants who provide information, or the units of information the researcher needs to collect. The concern is how geographically spread-out the physical locations are and how that affects your choice of a data collection method/tool. For our purposes, the range of physical locations will be defined as follows:

- Limited-range – Participants/units of information are situated in a single location or in multiple locations that are concentrated within a single geographical area. You can easily travel to each location to collect information, or it is convenient for participants to travel to you to provide the information.

- Wide-range – Participants/units of information are situated in multiple locations within a widespread geographical area. Traveling to each location to collect information or participants traveling to you to provide information is inefficient or inconvenient.

Particular data collection method/tools are more effective than others when considering the location of participants/units. That is, a particular data collection method/tool may be more effective and efficient when collecting information from participants located in a wide-range of physical locations. These differences among participant/unit locations should be taken into account when choosing a data collection method/tool.

Participant Skills
Participant Skills refer to two particular skill sets that participants (i.e., any individual who is providing you with information) may need to maximize the benefit of using a data collection method/tool. The two skill sets are:

- Communication & Interpersonal Skills – This refers to a participant's skill in conveying information to others *orally and/or in writing*, listening to others, and interacting with others in a productive and mutually beneficial manner in order to understand and communicate the information you want to collect.

- Reading Comprehension – This refers to a participant's skill in reading and comprehending written materials in order to understand and implement written instructions or requests for information and answer written questions.

The level of participant skills may differ based on variations in the participants' backgrounds and experiences. For example, oral communication and interpersonal skills may be very important to perform Job A. As a result, participants from Job A may have higher levels of oral communication and interpersonal skills than other jobs. Therefore, data collection method/tools that require oral communication and interpersonal skills may be more appropriate when the sample of participants is from Job A.

How do the data collection methods compare?
The following table compares the data collection method/tools in terms of the participant/ unit sample characteristics. The table indicates the ideal situation to use a data collection method, although your research questions/goals and the constraints of your assignment will affect the situation. Comments are provided to elaborate on each method/tool.

Method/Tool	Participant/Unit Sample			Comments
	Sample Size	Location of Participants/Units	Participant Skills	
Document Review	All	All	All	• The use of technology gives you access to large amounts of information from a wide range of locations. For example, Internet searches provide access to international sources.
Personal Interview	Small	Limited-range	Communication & Interpersonal Skills	• Ideal for small sample sizes within a limited range of locations. Interviewing large sample sizes becomes time-consuming. • Traveling is inconvenient for you and the participants.
Telephone Interview	Small to Medium	Wide-range	Communication & Interpersonal Skills	• Ideal for small to medium sample sizes. Interviewing large sample sizes becomes time-consuming. • Can gather information from a wide range of locations because traveling is eliminated.
Focus Group	All	Wide-range	Communication & Interpersonal Skills	• Sample sizes are more manageable because interviews are conducted in groups rather than individually. • Ideal when participants are from a wide range of locations as it provides a representation of perspectives.
Survey	Medium to Large	Wide-range	Reading Comprehension	• Surveys are most efficient when collecting information from medium to large sample sizes. • Surveys can be easily distributed to participants in a wide-range of locations.
Observation (Personal)	Small	Limited-range	Not applicable	• Ideal for small sample sizes within a limited range of locations. Otherwise, collecting information becomes time-consuming. • Participant skills are not applicable. Your role is to observe behaviors in regardless of participant skills.

Response Rates, Time, & Cost

As stated earlier, your goal is to gather as much relevant information as possible within the constraints of your assignment. Some of these constraints deal with response rates, time, and costs.

Response Rates

Response rates refer to the likelihood that participants will actually participate in the data collection process and provide useable, relevant, and accurate information. Particular data collection method/tools are more likely to solicit participation than others.

Efficient Use of Time

Efficient Use of Time refers to how well a data collection method/tool gathers information from participants when given time constraints to develop and implement the method/tool. Data collection method/tools vary on how efficient they are in collecting information within the established time constraints.

Cost Effectiveness

Cost Effectiveness refers to the monetary amount necessary to develop and implement a data collection method/tool. Considering all the cost factors, particular data collection method/tools are generally more cost effective than others. Data collection method/tools vary on costs, such as

- how long it takes to develop.
- who will be responsible for developing and implementing it.
- how many participants are involved in the process.
- how long it takes to implement.
- the available resources associated with a data collection method/tool (e.g., existing technology, available sites to collect data, etc.).

The Response Rates, Time, & Costs Trade-off

There is an inherent trade-off among response rates, efficient use of time, and cost effectiveness. It is often stated that only two out of the three factors can be achieved in any one data collection method. For example, interviews generally yield the highest response rates but take the longest and are expensive to develop and implement.

How do the data collection methods compare?

The following table compares the data collection method/tool based on the RTC factors by using the following symbols:

Plus Sign (+)	Negative Sign (–)	Both signs (+/–)
Generally a positive or favorable characteristic	Generally negative or unfavorable characteristic	Characteristic depends on other related factors, such as the sample size, location of participants/units, research question and goals, etc.

Method/Tool	**Response Rates, Time, & Costs**			**Comments**
	Response Rates	**Efficient Use of Time**	**Cost Effectiveness**	
Document Review	+/–	+	+	• If you are collecting information from individuals, response rates will depend on their cooperation to provide the information. • You can collect a large amount of information in a short period of time. • Costs limited to time spent collecting the information from various sources.
Personal Interview	+	–	–	• If participants show up to the interview, you have more control over the response rates as they are more likely to provide information in face-to-face conversations. • Inefficient use of time if you need to collect information from a large sample of participants. • Generally cost effective to develop, but cost ineffective to implement, especially for large samples of participants.
Telephone Interview	+	+/–	+/–	• If you get in contact with the participants, you have more control over the response rates as they are more likely to provide information in a directed conversation. • More efficient use of time than personal interview, especially if the sample size is small to medium. • Generally cost effective to develop, but cost ineffective to implement, especially large samples of participants. More cost effective than personal interview to implement; more participants can be interviewed by telephone than in-person within a given time period.
Focus Group	+	+/–	–	• If participants show up to the focus group meeting, you have more control over the response rates as they are more likely to provide information in a face-to-face group interaction. • More efficient use of time than personal interview, if sample size is medium to large, as meetings are held in multiple sessions rather than individually. • Generally cost ineffective to develop and implement.

Method/Tool	Response Rates, Time, & Costs			Comments
	Response Rates	Efficient Use of Time	Cost Effectiveness	
Survey	–	+	+	• Less control over response rates as participants are not compelled to complete and return the surveys. Techniques to increase response rates are required. • More use of time when you need to collect information from a large sample of participants in wide range of locations. • Generally, cost ineffective to develop, but cost effective to implement. Costs may increase for more complex survey designs.
Observation (Personal)	+/–	+/–	+	• Response rates depend on your access to participants for observation. • Efficient use of time when observing a small sample of participants within a limited range of locations. • Costs typically limited to time spent observing participants. Costs may increase if a more complex observation method is needed.

Research Experience

Research experience refers to your professional work experience performing duties related to data collection and employing various data collection method/tools. Particular data collection method/tools do require more extensive experience than others in terms of the development and implementation.

For our purpose, the levels of research experience needed are defined as follows:

- Basic level – Researcher may have no work experience conducting research assignments or may have work experience conducting basic research assignments, such as Internet searches or retrieval of information from archival sources.

- Intermediate level – Researcher may possess some work experience conducting basic to intermediate research assignments, which may include Internet searches and developing and conducting a short telephone or in-person interview.

- Advanced level – Researcher may possess extensive work experience in conducting intermediate to complex research assignments, which may include collecting and reviewing professional publications and/or developing and conducting focus groups, surveys, or longer telephone or in-person interviews.

How do the data collection methods compare?
The following table shows the data collection method/tools in ranked order of the level of research experience required (from basic to advanced):

Level of Research Experience	Data Collection Method/Tool	Why?
Basic	Document Review	• Many of the skills needed to conduct a document review may be learned on the job.
	Personal Interview	• Requires some previous experience in data collection. • Many of the skills needed may be learned on the job. • Additional knowledge of data collection principles may be needed to design more complex forms of each method.
	Telephone Interview	
	Observation (Personal)	
	Focus Group	• Requires extensive experience in data collection as there are many technical principles that guide the development and implementation of these methods. • Conducting focus groups require satisfactory skills in group facilitation.
Advanced	Survey	

<u>Quality of Data</u>
The goal in every research assignment is to gather as much quality information as possible. *Quality of data* refers to how relevant and useful the data is to fulfilling the research questions and goals. With each data collection method/tool, there is an amount of control you have over the resulting quality of the data, assuming that good preparation work has been done prior to implementing the method/tool (e.g., developing good interview questions). The following table shows the data collection method/tools in order of the amount of direct control you have over the quality of the data collected (from most control to less control):

Amount of Control	Data Collection Method/Tool	Why?
Most Control	Personal Interview	• During the interview, you may ask probing questions that may be used at any time to gather more detailed information from participants.
	Telephone Interview	
	Focus Group	
	Survey	• You develop the survey questions, but your ability to follow-up on participant responses is limited.
	Observation (Personal)	• Your role is simply to watch and record participant behavior. You must have little to no influence over actual participant behaviors.
Least Control	Document Review	• Because documents are produced by other individuals, you have no control over how they collected their data.

Summary

There are numerous factors to consider when choosing which data collection method/tools to complete your research assignment. It is important to re-emphasize that no one data collection method/tool is ideal for every situation nor will any one factor determine the most appropriate method/tool. You must consider all the relevant factors together when deciding which ones to employ.

Furthermore, depending on the research questions and goals, you should consider using more than one data collection method to fulfill your assignment. In most cases, it is appropriate and highly recommended to do so. Using multiple methods in a research assignment serves several purposes:

- *Higher potential for sound decisions* – Using multiple methods provides a richer, more detailed picture upon which one can make sound decisions.

- *Better use of time* – If you have a limited amount of time, you may initially collect general information to determine if additional information is necessary. If you need to collect additional information, then you can use other data collection methods to collect the additional information or refine the information you already have.

- *Reduces the chance of collecting inaccurate information* – Using multiple methods allows you to emphasize the advantages of particular data collection methods and compensate their challenges with other methods. This approach reduces the chance of collecting inaccurate information because of the inherent shortcomings of a particular method.

Data Collection Method/Tool by Factor Comparison

The following table summarizes the *preferred* data collection method/tool (as denoted by an "X") based on the factors to consider when selecting a data collection method/tool.

	Participant/Unit Sample						
	Sample Size			Locations of Participants/Units		Participant Skills	
Method/Tool	Small	Medium	Large	Limited-range	Wide-range	Communication & Interpersonal	Reading Comprehension
Document Review	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personal Interview	X			X		X	
Telephone Interview	X	X			X	X	
Focus Group	X	X			X	X	
Survey (Hardcopy/Electronic)		X	X		X		X
Observation (Personal)	X	X		X		n/a	n/a

	Response Rates, Time, & Costs			Level of Researcher Experience		
Method/Tool	Response Rates	Efficient Use of Time	Cost Effectiveness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Document/Data Review		X	X	X		
Personal Interview	X				X	
Telephone Interview	X				X	
Focus Group	X	X				X
Survey (Hardcopy/Electronic)		X	X			X
Observation (Personal)			X		X	

Ethics & Data Collection

To collect data ethically, you must balance between two responsibilities. On the one hand, there is the responsibility to collect and use the information in an honest manner in order to further one's knowledge and ultimately seek answers. On the other hand, there is the responsibility to treat the participants fairly while collecting the information: to build trust, gain support, and be forthright throughout the process. By diligently maintaining a reasonable balance between these two duties, you can achieve the following results:

- The well-being of the participants is protected.
- Participants are more likely to provide information in the future.
- The integrity of the data collection process is maintained.
- The accuracy, objectivity, and security of the collected data are maintained.
- A level of professional conduct in the research process is promoted.

The ethical issues revolve around treating the participants fairly and maintaining the data properly by ensuring the following throughout the data collection process:

- voluntary participation
- informed consent
- protection of participant identity
- data security
- proper use of data

Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation refers to a participant's right to freely choose to provide information. Ideally, anyone who is providing you information should be a "willing participant": a person who is fully aware that he/she is providing information and does not perceive that he/she is being forced to do so. This practice is essential to protecting the well-being of the participants while collecting meaningful information. A way to ensure voluntary participation from a participant is by obtaining informed consent.

Note: In the workplace setting, it is every employee's responsibility to participate in work assignments that may include providing and sharing information, as appropriate, for another employee's research assignment.

Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to two obligations: (1) informing a participant why information is being collected from him/her, and (2) obtaining his/her permission to collect information prior to using the specific data collection method/tool. Gaining informed consent prior to collecting data is an important aspect of gaining voluntary participation from a participant.

The first obligation refers to the notion that you should describe to participants

- the purpose of collecting the information.
- how the information will and/or will not be used.
- any benefits or consequences for participating.

An example would be explaining to a participant that you are collecting employees' opinions about a program that the department wants to implement (i.e., the purpose). You would explain to the participants that the information will be used to develop various aspects of the program (i.e., how the information will be used) and that his/her opinion will help shape the way the program is implemented (i.e., the benefit).

The second obligation refers to gaining permission from a participant to collect the information from him/her by either of the following ways:

- Verbally explaining to the participant the above information, then obtaining a verbal agreement from the participant to provide information. This practice is most often performed when conducting telephone interviews.
- Explaining to the participant the information above in writing, then obtaining agreement to provide information through the participant's signature. This practice is most often performed when administering questionnaires or conducting personal interviews.

Protection of Participant Identity

Also important in collecting data ethically is considering how to protect the identity of a participant during the data collection process. That is, you must be clear to a participant whether you will maintain a level of *confidentiality* or *anonymity*.

Confidentiality

Depending on your assignment, you will be required to maintain a level of *confidentiality*, which refers to knowing the identity of the participant but promising not to reveal it. Often times, you will inform a participant that his/her identity may be revealed to only those who are directly involved in the research assignment.

Uses of Confidentiality	How to ensure confidentiality
• When personal contact is made with the participant, such as in an observation or interview. • When you may need to collect additional information from a participant in the future. • When collecting information for a document review from a representative of another agency.	• Use a random identification system (001, 002, 003, etc.) instead of easily recognized identifiers (e.g., employee numbers or social security numbers). • Maintain documentation that links the identification system with the participant identities private and secure. • Disclose the identity of the person who provided you the information only if the person gives you permission to do so or you judge that disclosing the identity does not harm the person in any way. You may consider informing the person of your disclosure.

Anonymity

In a few assignments, you will decide to maintain *anonymity*, which refers to not being able to identify a participant based on his/her responses. That is, no link can be made between the participant and his/her specific responses.

Uses of Anonymity	How to ensure anonymity
• When particularly sensitive information is collected. • When it is unnecessary for you to collect additional information from participants in the future. • When conducting surveys.	• Ensure no questions produce responses related to any personal identification (e.g., employee numbers or social security numbers). • Ensure that questions do not produce responses that may be used in combination to identify the participant (e.g., work location, ethnicity, gender, birth dates).

Data Security

In addition to protecting the identity of a participant, it is equally important to protect and secure all the information that is collected, especially when the data contains personal identification. Furthermore, data security refers to limiting the access to information to specific individuals, most likely those who are directly involved in the research assignment.

To ensure the protection and security of the data collected, the following basic steps should be taken:

- Secure hardcopy data in a file cabinet that can be locked and that limits access to individuals.
- Secure electronic data by keeping it password protected and limiting access to other individuals.
- Remove identifying personal information from electronic databases and replace it with an assigned identification number. If you need to identify participants for follow-up, keep the identifying data and the collected data separated and in a secure place.
- Continue maintaining data security even after the research assignment is complete or shred hardcopy files or delete electronic files from the computer.

Proper Use of Data

The proper use of the data you collect is as important as your interactions with those who provide you the information. Properly using data demonstrates your commitment to collecting information in an ethical manner in order to gain understanding and find the answers to your questions. There are two common issues related to the proper use of the data.

The first issue has to do with the use of another person's work: his/her ideas(s), information, language, or writings. When someone uses another person's work *as their own without acknowledging or giving credit to that person*, this is referred to as *plagiarism*. Because numerous information sources, ideas, and thoughts are easily accessible due to technology, you should be mindful as to how you integrate another person's work into your own. Here are two ways you can appropriately integrate another's work into your own:

- Ensure that you acknowledge the other person's work in your documentation by listing all the references and sources you used in your work.
- Think critically about the information you gather and add new elements to the information based on your own thoughts, perspectives, and experiences. *Note: You can still acknowledge other people's work in your documentation by listing all the references and sources you used.*

The second issue has to do with how you use the information in order to fulfill your research questions and goals. It would be inappropriate to manipulate the information to fit your research questions and goals, when the information actually suggests otherwise. That is, it is inappropriate to present only selected parts of the information you collect that will support your research goals without presenting *all* the information or presenting parts of the information *without* placing in its *proper* context. Assuming that you have collected relevant and accurate data in an appropriate manner, the information should lead you to the most appropriate decision, not vice versa.

Summary

There are several ethical issues related to data collection, namely voluntary participation, informed consent, protection of participant identity, data security, and the proper use of data. Having a basic understanding of these issues is necessary throughout the data collection process, including when you develop and implement any data collection method/tool.

Basic Principles of Developing Data Collection Methods

This section highlights basic principles and practical guidelines related to developing data collection methods. These principles and guidelines increase the likelihood that the information you collect is accurate, reliable, and relevant to your research questions and goals within the constraints of your assignment.

Note: This section provides a general overview of guidelines related to developing data collection methods. There is no guarantee that someone who reads this guide will be able to properly develop a data collection method. You are encouraged to review additional information covering this topic area (The bibliography at the end of this guide lists several references for your review.).

Document Review

An important aspect of the document review method is to understand your research questions and goals, the constraints of your assignment, and the advantages and challenges of each document review source. This understanding assists you in focusing your attention on searching for the most relevant document review sources. Additional guidelines for developing a document review method include the following:

- To have a clear understanding of the research purpose and the types of information you are looking for, ask your supervisor (or whomever assigned you the research assignment) for as much clarification as to what information he/she is looking for and why. This will help you focus your search on finding the information you are looking for.
- If you are contacting people for information, make a list of the documents/data you want in order to request and collect information more efficiently.
- Create and maintain a database of your sources and references. This may include contact information from the other organizations, a list of the most useful websites, relevant professional publications, etc. This practice makes similar searches in the future more efficient and allows you to easily share knowledge among your co-workers.

Question Development for Interviews and Surveys

When developing an interview or survey, you will need to create a set of questions that solicit the kinds of information you need to fulfill your research questions and goals within the constraints of your assignment. Basic principles related to writing questions include the following:

- Choose between open-ended vs. close-ended questions.
    - *Open-ended questions* are questions that have no pre-established set of responses for a participant to choose from. Participants freely respond to the question depending on the question's intent and answer the question in their own words.

Examples: Open-ended Questions
• "How would you improve in your organization's request-for-proposal process?"
• "How would you describe the quality of customer service you have received from this office?"
• "How would you change the way clients currently receive and submit applications for public assistance?"

- *Close-ended questions* refer to questions with a set range of answers determined prior to the interview or survey, and the participant must choose one or more responses among the given set of answers (e.g., yes/no; choose one among the choices; check all that apply; etc.).

Examples: Close-ended Questions
• On a scale from one to seven, seven being the most satisfied, how satisfied are you with the service provided by the district offices?
• In the past 6 months, how many workshops have you attended?
• What is the highest level of education you have earned?

- Write questions using language that provides the same meaning among participants based on a common background, such as an occupation, industry, department, etc. This ensures a consistent message being conveyed to participants, which leads to more accurate responses. This can be a challenging task. One technique is to use the most common terms possible when writing questions.
- Provide enough information in the question for a participant to adequately formulate or choose a response. This minimizes the chance of a participant trying to guess what information you are looking for.
- Limit each question to a single reference or topic. This prevents any confusion among participants as to the purpose of the question and ensures the accuracy of the responses.

Example: Multiple vs. Single Reference	
Multiple reference (i.e., Undesirable)	*Single reference (i.e., Desirable)*
• How satisfied are you with the Return-to-Work program and the Employee Assistance Program?	• How satisfied are you with the Return-to-Work program? • How satisfied are you with the Employee Assistance Program?

- Avoid biased or leading questions. These questions compromise the integrity of the research assignment and ultimately lead to inaccurate results.

Example: Leading vs. Neutral Question	
Leading question (i.e., Undesirable)	*Neutral question (i.e., Desirable)*
• Did you exercise your right as a County employee to attend the last health fair?	• Did you attend the last health fair?

- In general, organize the questions in the following manner in order to increase the likelihood that the participant will provide the information you seek:
  - Start with questions that are easier to answer and gradually move to more difficult questions.
  - Start with questions covering general topics and gradually move to more specific topics.
  - Ask the questions in an order that makes sense to the participants (e.g., in chronological order or by topic areas).
- Ask personal questions (e.g., race, age, gender, education level, etc.) *at the end* of the interview or survey. Many people are reluctant to disclose personal information. When the first questions they answer are personal, the participant may become uncomfortable or reluctant to continue with the data collection process. By placing personal questions at the end, you increase the likelihood that the participant will provide the information you seek.

Interviews

In addition to the guidelines for developing questions outlined above, other principles related to developing questions specifically for interviews include the following:

- Use mostly open-ended questions. Open-ended questions produce more detailed and descriptive information in the participant's own words.
- Create questions that are easy to read and that clearly convey a message *when read aloud.*

Surveys

Survey development involves developing two component parts: (1) the Questions, and (2) the Response Choices. Each component part will be briefly explained below.

The Questions

In addition to the guidelines for developing questions outlined above, another principle related to writing questions specifically for surveys is to use mostly close-ended questions. If you decide to use open-ended questions in your survey, they should be kept to a minimum and placed at the end of the survey to ensure that all close-ended questions are answered first.

The Response Choices
The *response choices* are the set of responses that the participant chooses from in order to answer the question. While many other types of response choices exist, two basic types are *lists* and *scales*. *Lists* are categories of information from which a participant may choose one or more choices, depending on your instructions. *Scales* give participants a range of numbers from which he/she must choose one to answer the question. An example of each type of response choices is provided below.

Examples: Types of Response Choices	
List	*Scale*
Which geographical area(s) are you willing to work (you may choose more than one)? ☐ North ☐ West ☐ Central ☐ East ☐ South	How likely are you to participate in the new exercise program? 5. Highly Likely 4. 3. Neutral 2. 1. Not at all Likely

List of Response Choices
Basic principles for developing a list of response choices for a survey include the following:

- Be sure to provide a *complete* list of response choices. Complete lists eliminate any confusion among participants on how to respond and do not exclude any particular participants from responding (i.e., there is at least one category that everyone fits into).

Example: Complete vs. Incomplete Lists	
What is your current marital status?	
Incomplete (i.e., Undesirable)	*Complete (i.e., Desirable)*
☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed	☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed

- If the categories are ranges of numbers, each category should not overlap. This eliminates any confusion among participants on how to respond.

Example: Overlap vs. No Overlap in Range of Numbers	
In the past week, approximately how many times have you visited the department's Intranet site for work information?	
Overlap (i.e., Undesirable)	*No Overlap (i.e., Desirable)*
☐ Never ☐ 1 – 5 times ☐ 3 – 7 times ☐ 5 or more times	☐ Never ☐ 1 – 5 times ☐ 6 – 9 times ☐ 10 or more times

Scale of Response Choices
Basic principles for developing a scale of response choices for a survey include the following:

- Use scales when the questions measure a participant's attitude or opinion about a topic area (e.g., "How satisfied are you with …", "To what degree do you agree or disagree with …", "How likely are you to …", etc.).
- Balance and evenly distribute positive and negative response choices within the scale. Too many responses on either side – positive or negative – will inaccurately represent the true meaning of the participants' responses.

Example: Balanced vs. Unbalanced Scales	
To what extent do you agree with each statement?	
Unbalanced (i.e., Undesirable)	*Balanced (i.e., Desirable)*
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Mostly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Strongly Disagree	☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

- Generally, the number of choices in a scale should range between three (3) and seven (7). This range provides enough information for a participant to make a meaningful response and allows you to detect meaningful differences among participant responses without confusing the participants with too many choices.

Example: Range of Choices		
To what extent are you satisfied with the following services?		
3 choices	*5 choices*	*7 choices*
1. Satisfied 2. Neutral 3. Dissatisfied	1. Very Satisfied 2. Satisfied 3. Neutral 4. Dissatisfied 5. Very Dissatisfied	1. Extremely Satisfied 2. Very Satisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Neutral 5. Dissatisfied 6. Very Dissatisfied 7. Extremely Dissatisfied

Observations
An important aspect with the observation method is to understand the research questions and goals. This helps you establish a framework or guidelines for the observation. When the framework is set, you can create forms that facilitate and guide the documentation of behaviors/events that you observe. It may be as simple as taking notes on a notepad during the observation or as elaborate as

- creating a pre-determined list of behaviors/events you expect to observe and using tally marks to count the number of times you observe the behavior/event.
- determining the major categories of behavior/events (and create category headings) and providing space between each category heading for you to take notes on all the specific behaviors/events you observe.

Summary
Developing a data collection method that satisfies these guidelines is not easy. There is no set of rules that, if precisely followed, will ensure the creation of a good data collection method. These guidelines will not guarantee but rather increase the probability that a well-designed data collection method will be developed.

Procedural Considerations & Data Collection

Each data collection method has several procedural considerations that you should be aware of when implementing the method. These considerations help to ensure that you collect accurate and reliable information relevant to your research questions and goals within the constraints of the assignment. The following summary highlights the major procedural considerations associated with each method.

Document Review

Conducting a document review requires "detective work" during your search. Often times, you must contact numerous people or search through multiple sources before you find ones that give you the information you seek. To maximize the effectiveness of your search, the following guidelines may be used:

- Evaluate continuously whether or not the information you collect is in fact relevant to your research purpose within the constraints.
- Evaluate the reliability of the information you collect. This involves considering the source of the information, who originally produced the information, when the information was originally produced, the original intent of the information, etc.
- When collecting information from other organizations, a good business practice is to share your results with those organizations. This practice promotes reciprocity among organizations and increases the likelihood of sharing information in the future.
- Document the sources and results of your data collection. This makes future searches easier and more efficient. When you find the desired information, document the results by performing any of the following:
  - Print or make hard copies of the documents/data.
  - Save documents/data to your computer hard drive, whenever possible.
  - Copy and paste any information onto a word processing document (e.g., Microsoft Word).
  - If you are conducting an Internet search, save the website addresses for future review. *Remember that websites can be removed by their owners at any time without warning.*

Interviews

An important issue related to implementing interviews involves taking steps to reduce a participant's anxiety associated with collecting information using an interview. The more comfortable the participant is throughout the whole process, the more willing he/she will be to provide information. Steps may be taken during two main phases of implementing interviews: (1) preparing for the interviews, and (2) conducting the interviews. These procedural considerations are highlighted below.

Preparing for Interviews

When preparing for the interviews, the following guidelines may be used:

- Send each participant information that will help him/her prepare for the interview. Types of information to include are interview time, interview location, directions to interview location, contact information, length of time to allocate for the interview, etc.
- Ensure the interview location and facilities promote a positive environment to conduct interviews. This includes
  - considering the surrounding environment (e.g., noise levels). If you are conducting a telephone interview in a cubicle work environment, you may need to find a quiet room to conduct the interview.
  - properly arranging the interview room to make the interview setting comfortable for participants.
- For focus groups, you may need to address additional issues:
  - Attempt to obtain a group of participants that represent a diverse set of thoughts and experiences and still come from the population under study. This will reflect in the results of the focus group.
  - Focus your attention on facilitating the group discussion by obtaining assistance from a co-worker to record participant comments.

Conducting the Interviews

When conducting interviews, the following guidelines may be used:

- Begin the interview by explaining the interview's purpose to the participant. This builds trust with the participant and helps him/her focus on providing relevant information.
- Maintain an interested posture, eye contact, and expression throughout the interview. This demonstrates your attentiveness and interest in what the participant is saying.
- Provide enough time for you to conduct the interviews. This allows the participant to provide thorough and thoughtful responses without the feeling of being rushed.

Survey

An important issue related to implementing a survey is response rates. No matter how well you design and implement a survey, the research assignment could be unsuccessful if you do not receive enough completed surveys to draw meaningful conclusions. A few basic techniques to increase response rates are as follows:

- Provide an introductory letter that explains the purpose of the survey and detailed instructions on how to complete and return the questionnaire to you. The easier it is for participants to complete the survey, the more likely they will participate in the process.
- Implement a strategy to follow-up with participants (e.g., sending reminder cards or re-mailing or emailing surveys). This conveys to participants a message of seriousness and importance of the survey project.
- For surveys delivered by mail, provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. This makes returning completed surveys easier for participants.

- Keep the survey at a manageable length. You want to maintain a balance between asking enough questions to collect the information you need, while not overwhelming the participants with too many questions.
- Ensure the anonymity of the participants, whenever feasible. Participants are more likely to complete surveys when they know their responses are not directly linked to their personal identity.
- Use a third party vendor to administer and tabulate the results. This gives the participant an impression that you are making attempts to maintain objectivity.
- Offer a form of incentive, such as a prize drawing (e.g., gift certificates), for only those participants who complete a survey. Meaningful incentives increase the likelihood that participants will complete the survey.
- Emphasize organizational and personal benefits of completing the survey. Participants are more likely to complete surveys if they trust that the results will be used for positive initiatives (e.g., improvements in work processes).

Observation

One concern with implementing the observation method is gaining access to participants to observe. In most cases, obtaining approval from the appropriate individuals (e.g., supervisors or higher-level managers) will give you access to individuals whom you want to observe. Once you have gained access to participants, the following procedural guidelines may be followed:

- Set rules or guidelines for the observation:
  - When and where will the observation take place?
  - Who and/or what will be observed?
  - How will the observations be recorded?
  - How long will the observations take place?
- Understand that behaviors change when people are aware that they are being observed.
- Inform the individual that you are observing their work and explain why in an honest manner. This helps build trust with the individual being observed and reduces any anxiety associated with being observed in a workplace setting.

Summary

There are many challenges to implementing a data collection method in a way that produces meaningful results that fulfill your research questions and goals within the constraints of your assignment. Understanding and following general guidelines to implementing data collection methods may increase the probability that the methods will produce the relevant and reliable information you seek.

Conclusion

The formal research process is challenging, but it is something that can be accomplished. Reading this guide is your first step to moving toward enhancing the research you conduct. The information conveyed in this guide can assist you in developing research plans and data collection efforts. This will provide a solid foundation for most work-related research endeavors. For the more complex research assignments, we advise that you read the materials that we referenced in the bibliography along with other relevant sources on conducting research that you find.

What's next?

We will be updating this guide periodically. In the future, we are going to develop an information guide on statistics that will present information that could help you to better analyze the data you collect.

Your Feedback

In order to assist us in enhancing this document, we would greatly appreciate any feedback you would like to provide. Please email any suggestions to testprep@lacdhr.org. In the subject line of your email, please write "Data Collection Guide." Thank you in advance for your response.

Bibliography

This guide was developed based on the experience and opinions of its authors along with integrating the knowledge of the expert opinions referenced below. This guide was developed for a business setting, and we freely share it with all readers who may find its contents of interest.

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For more information about Internet search techniques, go to searchenginewatch.com.

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Appendix N

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ENGLISH USAGE for Business Writing

subject punctuation dangling modifier verb word usage noun misplaced modifier pronoun voice parallelism conciseness capitalization

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! The County of Los Angeles Department of Human Resources is pleased to offer this *Business Writing Guide* as part of a series of information guides developed by the Test Research Unit. We hope that you find it useful in enhancing your learning and career endeavors.

Writing is an important part of most business activities. Sometimes you write to document something for yourself (e.g., when you take notes at a meeting or make daily "to-do" lists). In these cases, you generally do not intend for others to read what you have written, and you do not *necessarily* need to follow any particular rules or structure.

Most times, however, you probably write to communicate something to another person who will read and need to understand what you have written. In these cases, you should write in such a way that the reader will be able to understand your message quickly and easily. Knowing and following the rules and guidelines of writing can help you accomplish this goal.

Purpose of this Guide

This guide describes *some* of the fundamental rules and guidelines of writing. Specifically, it covers elements of grammar, style, and mechanics that are important to writing *business* documents (e.g., memoranda, letters, emails, proposals, reports, notices). It addresses:

- Noun/Pronoun Agreement
- Subject/Verb Agreement
- Misplaced/Dangling Modifiers
- Style (including voice, parallelism, and conciseness)
- Word Usage
- Capitalization & Punctuation

Objectives

We have developed this guide to provide you with an understanding of

- *some* of the fundamental rules and guidelines of business writing;
- how these rules and guidelines help make business documents more understandable; and
- ways to check that business writing adheres to these rules and guidelines.

Who should use this Guide?

This guide may be useful to anyone interested in learning about fundamental rules and guidelines of business writing. You should already have a firm understanding of the basic parts of speech (e.g., noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb). We have provided a *brief* glossary at the end of this guide that you may use to refresh your knowledge about the parts of speech and related terminology.

Disclaimer

This guide provides a partial review of this subject matter. Further study of the subject and related concepts may be necessary to provide the understanding needed to achieve your learning and/or career goals. Although this guide presents useful and practical information, there is *no guarantee* that someone who reads it will be able to perform better on the job or on a County examination. By merely using this guide, you consent to understanding and agreeing with this disclaimer.

WHY THE RULES AND GUIDELINES ARE IMPORTANT

The following memorandum shows why the rules and guidelines of writing are important. What would you think if you received it?

November 1, 2009

To: All Staff

From: Approvals Committee Workgroup

Subject: Updates on New Approvals System

The new approvals system will be launched affective on November 22. The system is being developed proactively and to keep up with the increase in requests for approvals and changes to it and especially help the budget, administration's, operations and staffing divisions clients.

Of particular note is the new communication process within divisions in our organization. Prior to the implementation of the new system, communications specific to any and every approvals was emailed and changes to an approval was sent in written form All communication centering on approvals as well as changes to it will henceforth be coming from the system as emails with the subject updates: approval request no to help in the identifying process and for the purposes of improving tracking.

Since being created, we have spend a lot of time in system testing and the development of a user guide. When published, users will be able to access them on demand from all workstation. The guide includes sample situations to think about. Additionally, focus group meetings will also be made available for everyone to provide feedback in the foreseeable future. We have been emailing everyone an agenda were contemplating for a focus group meeting on 113 in .pdf file format for your information.

Any questions about the system itself can be directed to the Help desk.

Most people who read this memorandum would probably have some difficulty understanding it. It is poorly-written, mainly because it does not follow the fundamental rules and guidelines of good business writing. There are many errors with noun/pronoun agreement, subject/verb agreement, misplaced/dangling modifiers, style, word usage, capitalization, and punctuation. Although this example may be somewhat exaggerated, it is nevertheless representative of common errors found in many business documents that prevent readers from quickly and easily understanding them.

The next sections of this guide describe some of the fundamental rules and guidelines for ensuring that your writing is not as confusing as this example! Each rule and guideline is illustrated with examples that use the following key:

✗ = Example is *incorrect.*
✓ = Example is *correct.*

NOUN/PRONOUN AGREEMENT

BASIC RULE: Pronouns must match the nouns they replace in person, number, gender, and case.

PERSON indicates whether the noun is the author (first person), the reader (second person), or someone/something else (third person).

First Person I will mail the documents.
{The pronoun "I" references the author of the statement}

Second Person You should receive them within three to four business days.
{The pronoun "You" references the reader of the statement}

Third Person They will arrive in a thick envelope.
{The pronoun "They" references something other than the author/reader}

NUMBER indicates whether the noun is about one person, place, or thing (singular), or multiple persons, places, or things (plural).

Singular I will mail the documents.
{The pronoun "I" references one person}

Plural I will mail the documents. They will arrive in a thick envelope.
{The pronoun "They" references multiple documents}

GENDER indicates whether the noun is masculine, feminine, or an object.

Masculine Forward your request to John. He will confirm that he received it.
{The pronoun "He" references the masculine noun "John"}

Feminine Forward your request to Marcia. She will confirm that she received it.
{The pronoun "She" references the feminine noun "Marcia"}

Object Forward your request to John. He will confirm that he received it.
{The pronoun "it" references the object "request"}

CASE indicates whether the noun is the subject/cause of the action (subjective), the object/receiver of the action (objective), or the owner of something referenced in the statement (possessive).

Subjective She assigns projects to workers after analyzing many factors.
{The pronoun "She" is the subject causing the action "assigns"}

Objective Given your unique project, Gary will probably assign it to me.
{"It" is the object receiving the action of being assigned}

Possessive I hope that you will be satisfied with my recommendation.
{"My" references the author's ownership of the recommendation}

The following table lists several pronouns according to their person, number, and case:

PRONOUNS	*Subjective*		*Objective*		*Possessive*	
	Singular	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
First Person	I	we	me	us	my	our
Second Person	you	you	you	you	your	your
Third Person	he, she, it	they	him, her, it	them	his, hers, its	their

NOUN/PRONOUN AGREEMENT

(continued)

Special Rules and Guidelines

Some words and word groupings have special rules that apply to them. It is important to understand the special rules along with the basic rule to ensure that nouns and pronouns agree. Additionally, there are special guidelines to follow to help you avoid common agreement errors. Some of these special rules and guidelines are described below.

The pronoun "who" references persons. The pronoun "that" references objects.

Example: Return the original documents to the clients that request them. ✗
Return the original documents to the clients who request them. ✓
{"Clients" references persons and requires the pronoun "who"}

Example: We are seeking a secretary that can type 40 words per minute. ✗
We are seeking a secretary who can type 40 words per minute. ✓
{"Secretary" references a person and requires the pronoun "who"}

When a pronoun references a singular noun AND a plural noun joined by "or" or "nor," it must agree with the noun closest to it. This also applies when the nouns have different genders.

Example: Either the employees or the manager will send their comments by the deadline. ✗
Either the employees or the manager will send her comments by the deadline. ✓
{The singular noun "manager" is closest to the pronoun which must also be singular}

Note: This is an example where re-writing, if possible, would be better than following the rule to avoid awkwardness. For example: "Either the manager will send her comments by the deadline or her employees will send theirs."

Checking for Noun/Pronoun Agreement

- ✓ Is the noun first, second, or third person?
- ✓ Is the noun singular or plural?
- ✓ Is the noun masculine, feminine, or an object?
- ✓ Is the noun subjective, objective, or possessive?
- ✓ Do any of the special rules apply?

SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

BASIC RULE: Subjects and verbs must agree in person and number.

PERSON indicates whether the subject is the author (first person), the reader (second person), or someone/something else (third person).

First Person I will mail the documents to you.
{The author is the subject who is causing the action}

Second Person You should review them before returning them to me.
{The reader is the subject who is causing the action}

Third Person My assistant will review them by the fifteenth of this month.
{Someone/something other than the author or reader is causing the action}

NUMBER indicates whether the subject is about one person, place, or thing (singular), or multiple persons, places, or things (plural).

Singular Ms. Jones has earned the organization's highest achievement award.
{The subject is one person: Ms. Jones}

Plural The ergonomic keyboards have design features that will make our work easier.
{The subject is multiple things: keyboards}

Changing the Person and Number of Verbs

The following table describes the action verbs "read" and "watch" according to their person and number. Note that they are spelled the same way regardless of person or number in most instances. However, "s" or "es" is added to the end of the third person singular verb to make it agree with its subject in person and in number. This pattern applies to many, but not all, action verbs.

ACTION VERBS	***Singular***		***Plural***	
First Person	I read.	I watch.	We read.	We watch.
Second Person	You read.	You watch.	You read.	You watch.
Third Person	He read**s**.	She watch**es**.	They read.	They watch.

Linking verbs that reflect states of being have special rules. Consider the following examples using the verbs "be" and "have":

LINKING VERBS	***Singular***		***Plural***	
First Person	I am.	I have.	We are.	We have.
Second Person	You are.	You have.	You are.	You have.
Third Person	He is.	She has.	They are.	They have.

Special Rules and Considerations

Some words and word groupings have special rules that apply to them. It is important to understand the special rules along with the basic rule to ensure that subjects and verbs agree. Additionally, there are special guidelines to follow to help you avoid common agreement errors. Some of these special rules and guidelines are described below.

Two or more subjects joined by "and" require a plural verb.

Example: The team leaders and my manager are attending the conference. ✓
{"Team leaders" and "manager" are the subjects. They require the plural verb "are"}

When two or more subjects are joined by "or" or "nor," the verb must agree with the subject that is closest to it.

Example: Neither a timeline nor frequent revisions guarantee a successful outcome. ✓
{"Timeline" and "revisions" are the subjects. Because "revisions" is closest to the verb and it is plural, the verb must be plural}

Example: Neither frequent revisions nor a timeline guarantees a successful outcome. ✓
{"Timeline" and "revisions" are the subjects. Because "timeline" is closest to the verb and it is singular, the verb must be singular}

Collective nouns require a singular verb.

Example: The committee is hesitant about the change. ✓
{Though "committee" references multiple people, it is a singular noun that requires the singular verb "is"}

Some indefinite pronouns are singular (e.g., anything, everyone, either, no one, each, etc.) and others are plural (e.g., few, many, several, etc.).

Example: Everyone is excited about the project and many have stayed to complete it. ✓
{The singular pronoun "everyone" requires the singular verb "is" and the plural pronoun "many" requires the plural verb "have"}

Some indefinite pronouns can be singular OR plural depending on the context of the statement.

Example: Here is the document; some was edited by Jessica, but Frank edited most of it. ✓
{The pronoun "some" references *how much* of the singular noun "document." Thus, it requires the singular verb "was"}

Example: Here are the documents; some have images that are best viewed in color. ✓
{The pronoun "some" references *how much* of the plural noun "documents." Thus, it requires the plural verb "have"}

SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT
(continued)

The subject is not always a noun or pronoun. When a verb (usually ending in "ing") is used as a subject, it is called a gerund and it takes a singular verb.

Example: Walking is a good cardiovascular exercise. ✓
{The verb "walking" is the subject. It requires the singular verb "is"}

Example: Submitting your application in-person expedites its processing. ✓
{The verb "submitting" is the subject. It requires the singular verb "expedites"}

The subject and verb must agree even when words come between them.

Example: Each of these benefits suggests the program is a worthwhile investment. ✓
{The singular subject "each" requires the singular verb "suggests"}

Example: Our mission to provide effective and efficient services was formally adopted in May. ✓
{The singular subject "mission" requires the singular verb "was"}

In statements that begin with "there is" or "there are," the noun or pronoun that follows is the actual subject with which the verb must agree.

Example: There are many questions. ✓
{"Questions" is the subject requiring the plural verb "are"}

There is a question. ✓
{"Question" is the subject requiring the singular verb "is"}

Checking for Subject/Verb Agreement

- ✓ Find the subject by asking "who" or "what" the statement is about.
- ✓ Determine whether the subject is singular or plural.
- ✓ Find the verb by asking what the subject "is" or what the subject "is doing" in the statement.
- ✓ Determine whether the verb is singular or plural.
- ✓ If the subject and verb are both singular (or both plural), they agree. If one is singular and the other is plural, they do not agree.

MISPLACED/DANGLING MODIFIERS

Misplaced modifiers are phrases that modify (i.e., describe) part of a statement in an ambiguous manner because they could potentially apply to another part of the statement. The confusion that results could be avoided by re-arranging the statement so the modifier is in a different place.

Example: Here are some helpful suggestions for protecting your homes from the police chief. ✕

Because of the order of phrases in this statement, it seems that readers need to protect their homes from the police chief! Though perhaps possible, this is probably not the intended message. The phrase "from the police chief" is the misplaced modifier that should be moved in order to make the statement clearer.

Example: Here are some helpful suggestions from the police chief for protecting your home. ✓

The following table provides additional examples of statements with misplaced modifiers that have been corrected to make them clearer.

Misplaced ✕	***Properly Placed*** ✓
Locate the enter key on the keyboard made of red plastic. {What is made of red plastic?}	Locate the enter key made of red plastic on the keyboard.
The building manager said that the office is freshly painted with new carpet and central air. {Carpet can be used to paint?}	The building manager said that the freshly-painted office has new carpet and central air.
She revised the form sitting in court. {Was the form sitting in court?}	Sitting in court, she revised the form.

To ensure that your reader can understand your writing, make sure to place modifiers close to the word(s) they are modifying in the statement.

Dangling modifiers are phrases that modify part of a statement, but are missing some important word(s) to help clarify what they really mean. The confusion that results could be avoided by adding the missing words.

Example: Once executed, you must check the contract for full compliance. ✕

This statement says that "After you are executed, you must check the contract…" This is probably not the intended meaning of the statement. The phrase "once executed" is the dangling modifier that needs a few extra words to help it become clearer.

Example: Once the contract is executed, you must check it for full compliance. ✓

As shown in this example, most dangling modifiers are phrases at the beginning of a statement that do not have their own subject. Because they do not have their own subjects, they attach themselves to the subject of the statement that follows and modify it, rather than what they are really supposed to modify. The table on the next page provides additional examples of statements with dangling modifiers that have been corrected in order to make them clearer.

MISPLACED/DANGLING MODIFIERS
(continued)

Dangling ✗	***Corrected*** ✓
Tattered and worn, Herbert has decided to request a new sofa for the lobby area. {Herbert is tattered and worn?}	The sofa was tattered and worn, so Herbert decided to request a new one for the lobby area.
Left unattended for most of the morning, the secretary decided to pick up the briefcase. {Was the secretary unattended?}	Because the briefcase had been left unattended for most of the morning, the secretary decided to pick it up.
While sitting in the meeting, the alarm sounded and surprised everyone. {The alarm sat at the meeting?}	While everyone was sitting in the meeting, the alarm sounded and surprised them.

Correcting Misplaced or Dangling Modifiers

- ✓ Ensure that modifiers are placed as close as possible to the word(s) they are modifying.
- ✓ Add subjects to modifiers at the beginning of statements or completely re-write the statements.

WRITING STYLE

Style does not relate to particular rules of grammar or mechanics, but rather to ways to arrange words in statements so they are clear and strong in conveying your message. Voice, parallelism, and conciseness are components of style that affect business writing. This section will describe these components along with a few other general style guidelines for business documents.

Voice

"Voice" relates to the direction of the action in a statement. There are two voices: active and passive. In active voice, the action is directed *from the subject* to someone or something else. In other words, the subject performs the action. In passive voice, the action is directed *to the subject* by someone or something else. In other words, the subject receives the action. The following table illustrates these two structures.

ACTIVE:	**Doer of Action ("Actor")** The analyst	→	**Action** wrote	→	**Receiver of Action** the report.
PASSIVE:	**Receiver of Action** The report	→	**Action** was written	→	**Doer of Action ("Actor")** by the analyst.

Though it is grammatically correct, passive voice often makes readers work too hard to figure out "Who did what?" In fact, many writers take advantage of this characteristic of passive voice when they must convey negative information and want it to be perceived less harshly. For example:

Passive ✕	***Active*** ✓
A review was conducted and your proposal was rejected.	The committee reviewed and rejected your proposal.
It is unfortunate that the letters were not issued on time.	Unfortunately, we did not issue the letters on time.
Errors were made, but they have been corrected.	We made some errors, but we have corrected them.

While there is prevalent use of passive voice in formal business documents, active voice is *generally* preferred to make statements clearer and more direct. However, using passive voice may be justified in some situations, such as when the "actor" is unknown, difficult to identify, or irrelevant to the overall message being conveyed (i.e., the receiver is more important than the "actor").

Example: We will return the equipment to the supplier because it was damaged during shipping. {The specific person who did the damage is unknown or difficult to identify}

Example: Thankfully, hundreds of volunteers were recruited at the last minute to participate in the clean-up. {Who did the recruiting is irrelevant to the overall message}

Checking for Active versus Passive Voice

- ✓ Find the verb in the statement.
- ✓ Ask "Who?" or "What?" is performing the action.
- ✓ If the statement is constructed so the "actor" is the subject, it has active voice. If the "actor" is the object, it has passive voice.

WRITING STYLE
(continued)

Parallelism

"Parallelism" is a balance of two or more similar words or phrases that creates a smooth rhythm and pattern in a statement. Statements that include non-parallel elements are awkward because they contradict the anticipated pattern, thus causing readers to stumble over your words as they attempt to understand them. Most issues with parallelism involve maintaining consistency when listing items, which must match each other in form to preserve the pattern.

> Example: Typical activities include answering phones, greeting customers, and data entry. ✗

This statement has faulty parallelism because the last item in the list (i.e., "data entry") is a noun, while the other items (i.e., "answering" and "greeting") are verbs. The statement is made parallel by consistently listing each item in the same form (i.e., by repeating the "-ing" pattern):

> Example: Typical activities include answering phones, greeting customers, and entering data. ✓

The following table provides additional examples of statements with non-parallel elements that have been made parallel in order to improve flow and understanding:

Non-Parallel ✗	***Parallel*** ✓
The recruiter's initial strategy is advertising online and then to conduct job fairs.	The recruiter's initial strategy is to advertise online and then to conduct job fairs. {Each item is a verb in the same form}
The last survey indicated that employees 1) have high commitment to the organization and 2) showed lower rates of absenteeism.	The last survey indicated that employees 1) had high commitment to the organization and 2) showed lower rates of absenteeism. {Each item is in the past tense}
The report was written quickly, accurately, and in a thorough manner.	The report was written quickly, accurately, and thoroughly. {Each item is an adverb}

Checking for Parallel Structure

- ✓ Put each item in a vertical, bulleted list and see if they each begin with the same type of word (e.g., Is each a noun? A verb? Is each one present tense?)
- ✓ Compare the sounds of the items. Does each one have an "–ly" sound at the end? An "-ed" sound? Is there some other rhythm being repeated? If any item seems to break that pattern or repetition of sound, it is probably not parallel with the others.

WRITING STYLE
(continued)

Conciseness

Shoe, October 1999 © Tribune Media Services

Business writing is most effective when it gets the point across *quickly*, that is, with as few words as possible to convey the message. Wordiness diminishes the clarity of your writing and makes understanding more complicated. Consider the following example which shows how a message can be lost when there are too many words:

Wordy: It is expected by management that great progress will be made by human resources in providing a solution to these problems in the near future. (25 words)

Concise: Management expects that human resources will soon solve these problems. (10 words)

Writing in active voice instead of passive voice is one way to make your statements more concise. Several examples are provided below to illustrate additional ways to improve the conciseness of your writing (the number of words in each example is noted in parentheses).

Choose words with the precise meaning intended (this includes avoiding unnecessary "not" phrases).

Wordy: The letter was sent by someone who did not provide his or her name. (14)
Concise: An anonymous person sent the letter. (6)

Wordy: You must schedule the deposition before tackling any other project or assignment. (12)
Concise: Scheduling the deposition is your priority. (6)

Eliminate redundancies (i.e., phrases that contain words with duplicate meaning).

Wordy: He discussed basic and fundamental principles of project management. (9)
Concise: He discussed basic project management principles. (6)

Wordy: She came up with a very unique alternative. (8)
Concise: She thought of a unique alternative. (6)

WRITING STYLE
(continued)

Avoid using nouns when verbs can be used instead.

Wordy: The function of this department is the collection of accounts. (10)
Concise: This department collects accounts. (4)

Wordy: The current focus of the medical profession is disease prevention. (10)
Concise: The medical profession currently focuses on disease prevention. (8)

Simplify.

Wordy: The duties of a clerk are to check all incoming mail and to record it. (15)
Concise: Clerks check and record all incoming mail. (7)

Wordy: We have a tendency to make decisions to take action on requests immediately when customers make a personal appearance with us. (21)
Concise: We generally decide to act immediately on requests when customers meet with us in-person. (14)

Remove any unnecessary clauses that begin with "that," "who," and "which."

Wordy: We chose the system that is most efficient and cost-effective. (10)
Concise: We chose the most efficient and cost-effective system. (8)

Wordy: All applicants who are interested in the job must comply with the rule. (13)
Concise: All job applicants must comply with the rule. (8)

Wordy: The report which was released recently showcased our success. (9)
Concise: The recently-released report showcased our success. (6)

Avoid beginning statements with "It is/was" or "There are/were."

Wordy: It is imperative that we find a solution. (8)
Concise: We must find a solution. (5)

Wordy: There are two issues that should be addressed in the report. (11)
Concise: The report should address two issues. (6)

As these *guidelines* suggest, the fundamental consideration for making your statements concise is to eliminate words that add bulk, but not meaning. The tables on the next page provide examples of redundant, imprecise, and wordy expressions commonly used in business writing and more concise alternatives.

WRITING STYLE
(continued)

Redundant ✗	Concise ✓
absolutely perfect	perfect
basic fundamental	basic
centered around	center
conclusive proof	proof
continue further	continue
each individual	each
end result	result
final outcome	result
future plans	plans
important essential	essential
increasingly more	increasingly
mutual cooperation	cooperation
past history	past
refer back	refer
sudden/serious crisis	crisis
sufficient enough	sufficient
together with	with
true fact	fact
unexpected surprise	surprise
very unique	unique

Imprecise ✗	Concise ✓
not accept	reject
not admit	deny
not allow	restrict
not confusing	clear
not different	similar
not have	lack
not include	omit
not many	few
not often	rarely
not the same	different

Wordy ✗	Concise ✓
• The reason for • Being that • Due to the fact that • In light of the fact that • On the grounds that	because, why
• It is crucial that • It is necessary that • There is a need for • It is important that	must, should
• As/in regards to • In reference to • With regard to/regarding • Concerning the matter of	about
• In the event that • If it should happen that • Under circumstances in which	if
• At the present time	currently, now
• Despite/due to the fact • Regardless of the fact that	although
• Is able to • Is in a position to	can
• It is possible that • There is a chance that • It could happen that • The possibility exists for	may, might, can, could
• Prior to • In anticipation of • Subsequent to • At the same time as • Simultaneously with	before, when, as, after
• On the occasion of • In a situation in which • Under circumstances	when
• On behalf of	for

Checking for Conciseness

✓ Is active voice used?
✓ Are the words precise?
✓ Is there a simpler way to convey the message?
✓ Are there unnecessary words or redundancies?

WRITING STYLE
(continued)

Other General Style Guidelines
The following are other general style guidelines for making your writing clear and understandable.

Avoid clipped words.

A clipped word is a shortened version of a longer word. It is appropriate to use clipped words in informal business writing (e.g., emails) or when you are certain that your reader will understand them. However, you should use full (i.e., non-abbreviated) words in formal business writing (e.g., reports, proposals, letters).

Clipped ✕	Full ✓
memo	memorandum
phone	telephone
asap	as soon as possible
cell	cellular

Avoid split infinitives.

Infinitives are verbs preceded by the word "to" (e.g., *to write*, *to address*, *to read*). Grammar rules dictate that an infinitive should be kept together (i.e., without any words in between). However, writing that explicitly follows this rule often ends up being awkward. Therefore, it has become *generally* acceptable to split an infinitive as long as the "to" and the verb remain fairly close together. Separating an infinitive with a long phrase (e.g., more than one or two words) can cause confusion.

Split Infinitive ✕	Intact Infinitive ✓
to clearly and concisely at all times write	to write clearly and concisely at all times
to as fairly and quickly as possible address concerns	to address concerns as fairly and quickly as possible

Do not end a statement with a preposition.

Although grammar rules dictate that prepositions should never be placed at the end of a statement, writing that explicitly follows this rule often ends up being awkward. In fact, it has become *generally* acceptable to ignore this rule in *informal* writing. However, formal business writing must still adhere to it. A good guideline for avoiding the awkwardness that can result is to re-write the statement altogether, if possible.

Example: Remember the name of the person you give the package to. ✕
Remember the name of the person to whom you give the package. ✓
Remember the name of the person who receives the package from you. ✓

Example: What are you requesting information about? ✕
About what are you requesting information? ✓
What is the information that you request? ✓

Avoid using "you" inappropriately.

Many writers inappropriately rely on using "you" to describe general statements, which can result in confusion about their intended message. To ensure clarity, avoid using "you" unless you are directly referring to the reader.

Example: Most customers complain that you cannot upload attachments to the system. ✗
{Is "you" everyone in general or the specific person reading the statement?}

Most customers complain that the system restricts attachment uploads. ✓

Avoid using "they" inappropriately.

Many writers inappropriately use the pronoun "they" when unsure about the gender of a singular noun. This error in noun/pronoun agreement is usually related to writers wanting to avoid the awkwardness of using "he or she," "he/she," or "s/he" in their statements. These constructions are grammatically correct, but are *generally* perceived to have an unnecessarily distant style. While you should always adhere to the rules of noun/pronoun agreement, re-writing statements to avoid those constructions is a good idea, if possible.

Example: If the <u>union</u> decides to proceed, <u>they</u> will send us your form. ✗
If the <u>union</u> decides to proceed, <u>it</u> will send us your form. ✓
If the <u>union</u> decides to proceed, <u>a union representative</u> will send us your form. ✓

Example: The <u>candidate</u>'s application will show whether <u>they</u> meet the requirements. ✗
The <u>candidate</u>'s application will show whether <u>he/she</u> meets the requirements. ✓
The <u>candidates</u>' applications will show whether <u>they</u> meet the requirements. ✓

Note: As illustrated in this example, making the noun plural is an easy way to change the statement so "they" can be correctly used.

Avoid nonstandard language.

Nonstandard language includes colloquialisms, clichés, idioms, slang, narrow analogies, or potentially offensive language. It should not be used in formal business writing.

Example: This will help employees keep their heads above water during the trial period. ✗
{"Heads above water" is a colloquialism}

This will help employees keep up with their work during the trial period. ✓

Example: Chairman is an elected position, but Secretary is not. ✗
{"Chairman" is potentially offensive. Language should be gender-neutral, as appropriate}

Chairperson is an elected position, but Secretary is not. ✓

Example: He really hit it out of the park with his presentation ✗
{"Hit it out of the park" is a sports analogy that all readers may not understand}

He did very well on his presentation. ✓

Avoid double negatives.

Double negatives occur when two negative words are used in the same statement. The two negatives "cancel" each other out to make a positive. Usually, double negatives can be avoided by choosing words more precisely.

Example: The delivery person left because she could <u>not</u> find <u>no one</u> in the office. ✗
{"Not" and "no one" are negatives that cancel each other out. This statement means that the delivery person found someone in the office, but left anyway}

The delivery person left because she could not find <u>anyone</u> in the office. ✓

Example: They determined that the request did <u>not</u> have <u>no</u> grounds to be denied. ✗
They determined that the request did <u>not</u> have <u>any</u> grounds to be denied. ✓
They determined that the request had no grounds to be denied. ✓

Note: Re-writing to avoid negatives altogether is a good idea, if possible. For example: "They determined that there were grounds to grant the appeal."

Additionally, though some statements that include double negatives can still be grammatically correct, the inclusion of double negatives nevertheless interferes with clarity. "Not unlikely" and "not impossible" are double negatives frequently used on business documents.

Example: The project is <u>not impossible</u>, but it will take a large effort to properly execute it. ✓
{Not impossible = possible}

The project is <u>possible</u>, but it will take a large effort to properly execute it. ✓

Be consistent.

One of the best ways to get your message across is to be consistent in the words you use. If there are two or more words that can be used to describe the same thing, choose one and use it exclusively. Switching among or between words that have the same intended meaning can confuse your readers. They may think you are discussing a new concept. Using the same word repeatedly may seem monotonous, but it will help to ensure that your message is quickly and easily understood.

Example: Applicants should <u>submit</u> the employment application as soon as possible. The job bulletin will indicate how to <u>file</u> it properly. We encourage applicants to speak with the Exam Analyst if they have questions about <u>applying</u> for the job. ✗

Applicants should <u>submit</u> the employment application as soon as possible. The job bulletin will indicate how to <u>submit</u> it properly. We encourage applicants to speak with the Exam Analyst if they have questions about <u>submitting</u> it. ✓

WORD USAGE

Effective writing depends on effective word selection. Thus, good writers must understand the differences between words so they can select the correct ones. This section will describe some specific words that are commonly confused or misused in business writing.

a/an

- Use *a* before words that begin with consonants (e.g., "hard" sounds) [1]
- Use *an* before words that begin with vowels (i.e., A, E, I, O, or U)[1]

Example: Our messenger will deliver a box of brochures in about an hour. ✓

accept/except

- *Accept* means to receive or take in someone or something
- *Except* means to leave something out

Example: Patients may accept visitors every day except Sunday. ✓

advice/advise

- *Advice* is a noun that means guidance or suggestion
- *Advise* is a verb that means to give advice

Example: The case worker advised the participant to seek the advice of a counselor. ✓

affect/effect

- *Affect* means to influence someone or something
- *Effect* is the consequence, result, or impact of something

Example: Recent hiring significantly affected workloads and produced positive effects on customer satisfaction. ✓

A handy memory tool to help you choose correctly between "affect" and "effect" in *most* situations is the acronym **RAVEN**:

Remember that
Affect is a
Verb and
Effect is a
Noun.

among/between

- *Between* references two things
- *Among* references more than two things

Example: The second most populous city among all major U.S. cities has fluctuated between Chicago and Los Angeles for several years. ✓

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[1] This rule is based on the first *sound* of a word rather than the actual first written letter. For example, the first letter (i.e., "h") in the word "honor" is a consonant, but it is silent when the word is pronounced. The first *sound* of the word is a vowel sound (i.e., the "o"). Thus, "an" is correct (i.e., an honor) instead of "a" (i.e., a honor). "Hard" sounds require "a" and "soft" sounds require "an."

Additionally, keep in mind that a given vowel can sound "hard" *or* "soft" in different words. For example, if the vowel "u" at the beginning of a word sounds like the word "you," then "a" is correct (e.g., He had a unique idea). Otherwise, "an" is correct (e.g., The project received an unprecedented budget). If the vowel "o" at the beginning of a word sounds like the letter "w," then "a" is correct (e.g., a one-sided document). Otherwise, "an" is correct (e.g., an only child).

WORD USAGE
(continued)

assure/ensure/insure
- *Assure* means to confidently encourage someone about something
- *Ensure* means to offer a guarantee; it references making something happen
- *Insure* means to prevent or protect against something unwanted or undesirable

Example: The IT Manager assured us that the back-up procedures will insure us against data loss and ensure that operations will continue after an emergency. ✓

at
- Do not use *at* after *where*; it is unnecessary.

Example: Susan works at the branch office; that is where my supervisor is at right now. ✗
Susan works at the branch office; that is where my supervisor is right now. ✓

beside/besides
- *Beside* means close to or next to
- *Besides* means in addition to

Example: Besides me, Paul and Ann also think a file cabinet should be beside each cubicle. ✓

compliment/complement
- *Compliment* relates to flattery or praise
- *Complement* means that two or more things support or work well together

Example: Chief Donald complimented the staff on their efforts to modify the program to complement the department's new strategic plan. ✓

choose/chose
- *Choose* is present tense or future tense
- *Chose* is past tense

Example: Regina already chose to go to tomorrow's session, but I will choose which session to attend after I speak with Bill. ✓

compare/contrast
- *Compare* means to note similarities
- *Contrast* means to note differences

Example: Many programs have comparable budgets; however, there is a tremendous contrast in staffing levels. ✓

continual/continuous
- *Continual* means intermittently repeated
- *Continuous* means uninterrupted or "all the time"

Example: The frustrated workers' continual pleas for different cubicles stem from the continuous noise of the nearby copy machine. ✓

WORD USAGE
(continued)

decide/determine

- *Decide* means to subjectively choose from among several options; there is no "right" or "wrong"
- *Determine* means to objectively evaluate something according to a standard; there is a "right" or "wrong"

Example: We determined that fulfilling the request would violate departmental policy and told Mr. Fox to call headquarters if he decides to appeal. ✓

e.g./i.e.

- The *e.g.* abbreviation means "for example." It is used to list examples after a general statement. The list is usually considered incomplete.
- The *i.e.* abbreviation means "that is" or "in other words." It is used to clarify something previously stated. When the clarification is a list of items, using *i.e.* indicates that the list is complete.

Example: We purchased many office supplies (e.g., staplers and file folders), but have now exhausted our supply budget (i.e., funds are no longer available). ✓

Example: During our busiest months (e.g., May), we approve most overtime requests. ✓
{This means that that May is one of the busiest months, not the only one}

Example: During our busiest month (i.e., May), we approve most overtime requests. ✓
{This means that May is the busiest month}

Punctuating *i.e.* and *e.g.*

✓ While the *e.g.* and *i.e.* abbreviations can be used either with or without parentheses, they should always be used with parentheses in formal business documents.

✓ Regardless of placement in a statement, the *e.g.* and *i.e.* abbreviations are always lowercase letters separated with periods that are always followed with a comma.

equal/equitable

- *Equal* means the same
- *Equitable* means fair

Example: Each plaintiff will have an equal opportunity to testify and will receive an equitable portion of any settlement. ✓

farther/further

- *Farther* is used to compare length or distance
- *Further* means additional time or amount; it suggests "to a greater degree"

Example: We will further evaluate the logistics plan, particularly because it places restrooms farther away from employee workstations than what seems reasonable. ✓

fewer/less

- *Fewer* is used for things that can be counted
- *Less* is used for things that cannot be counted; it denotes degree, value, or percentage

Example: This change should result in clients having less of an issue with the kiosks even though fewer will be on hand. ✓

good/well

- *Good* is an adjective
- *Well* is an adverb; if it is used as an adjective, it means healthy or strong.

Example: She interviewed good. Her responses to our questions were good. ✗
She interviewed well. Her responses to our questions were good. ✓

Example: The meeting went good; we are well on our way to achieving the goal. ✗
The meeting was good; we are well on our way to achieving the goal. ✓

imply/infer

- *Imply* means to express something indirectly; to suggest
- *Infer* means to make an assumption about something

Example: The director's message implied that our fiscal outlook is good. Staff inferred from it that pending training requests would subsequently be approved.

irregardless/regardless/irrespective

- *Irregardless* is not a word
- *Regardless* and *irrespective* mean "despite" or "without consideration"

Example: Irregardless of the obstacles, we will meet the challenge and succeed. ✗
Regardless of the obstacles, we will meet the challenge and succeed. ✓
Irrespective of the obstacles, we will meet the challenge and succeed. ✓

its/it's

- *Its* is a pronoun that shows possession
- *It's* is the contraction of "it is"

Example: After you verify its capacity, please reserve the room for the first Monday that it's available. ✓

Choosing between *Its* and *It's*

A useful strategy for choosing correctly between *its* and *it's* is to remember that the apostrophe takes the place of the missing "i" in the "it is" contraction.

WORD USAGE
(continued)

lead/led

- *Lead* is a present tense noun that means to guide or direct. It can also reference a scientific metal.
- *Led* is a past tense noun that means to guide or direct.

Example: The scanner only reads markings made with a lead pencil. ✓

Example: Because they successfully led last year's project, Supervisor Clark will probably choose them to lead this year's project as well. ✓

may be/maybe

- *May be* is a verb that means "might be" or "could be"
- *Maybe* is an adverb that means perhaps or possibly

Example: The union representatives may be organizing for a re-election, but maybe not. ✓

me/myself

- The pronoun *me* is an object; it receives some action from someone or something else
- The pronoun *myself* is also an object; it only receives action from you (i.e., "I" will always be the subject)[2]

Example: I worked on the contract myself; please give any comments to me. ✓

number/amount

- *Number* is used for something that can be counted
- *Amount* is used for something that cannot be counted; it denotes degree, value, or percentage

Example: The large amount of effort to make this change is justified because the change will help reduce the number of delinquencies. ✓

of/have

- *Of* is a preposition that is often misused to mean "have." This mistake relates to how contractions that include the word "have" sound when pronounced (e.g., could've).

Example: The letter clearly indicated the due date. You could of overlooked it. ✗
The letter clearly indicated the due date. You could have overlooked it. ✓

principle/principal

- A *principle* is a fundamental rule, law, or concept; it is always a noun
- A *principal* is someone or something of highest importance or substance; it can be a noun or an adjective

Example: Though the manager successfully uses micro-management principles with most of her staff, our principal observation is that Betty needs more autonomy. ✓

---

[2] This applies to all pronouns that end in "self" (i.e., the subject must be the same person). For example, "I" must be the subject if "myself" is the object, "you" must be the subject if "yourself" is the object, "she" must be the subject if "herself" is the object, etc.

WORD USAGE
(continued)

than/then

- *Than* compares multiple items
- *Then* refers to time

Example: This year's review period is much shorter than it was last year. It was four weeks then, but we had to document more information. ✓

that/which

- Use *that* before information that is critical to the meaning of the statement (i.e., something that needs to be there or else the meaning would change)
- Use *which* before information that is not critical to the meaning of the statement (i.e., something that just provides additional information without really changing the meaning)

Example: The review office gives priority to cases that are submitted on time. ✓
{Only the cases submitted on time have priority}

Example: Your case file, which is on Bob's desk, will be submitted by deadline. ✓
{The information about the file being on Bob's desk could be removed without changing the meaning of the statement}

their/there/they're

- *Their* is a pronoun that shows possession of something by several persons or things
- *There* is a location
- *They're* is the contraction of "they are"

Example: They're present at the field office because their primary task is to report on operations there. ✓

to/too/two

- *To* means going toward; it relates to direction
- *Too* means in addition or to an excessive degree
- *Two* is the whole number that comes after "one" and before "three"

Example: Mr. Diaz is going to the meeting so he can meet the two new analysts, too. ✓
The proposal is too lengthy; we need to condense it . ✓

Punctuating *Too* and *To*

✓ When used to mean "in addition," *too* is always preceded by a comma and followed by another comma or other appropriate punctuation symbol (e.g., period, question mark, semi-colon, etc.).

✓ Because *to* is a preposition, it should never be the last word of a statement in formal business writing.

try and/try to

- *Try and* is an imprecise expression; replace it with *try to*

Example: After we discuss the project, try and meet the goals right away. ✗
After we discuss the project, try to meet the goals right away. ✓

WORD USAGE
(continued)

use/utilize

- *Use* means to manipulate something for its intended purpose
- *Utilize* means to manipulate something for an unintended purpose

Example: During earthquake training, we learned that office chairs can be utilized as protection against falling objects. A back-up generator would be used to provide power. ✓

Example: We utilized two books to level the wobbly table so the clerks could use it for assembling the packets. ✓

who/whom

- *Who* is always a subject that refers to the person doing the action of the statement
- *Whom* is always an object that refers to the person receiving the action of the statement

Example: The worker to whom you are assigned is the one who will issue payment. ✓

Choosing between *Who* and *Whom*

A useful strategy for choosing correctly between *who* and *whom* is to re-write the phrase that begins with *who* or *whom* as a complete thought and then substitute a pronoun for *who* or *whom*. If a subjective pronoun (i.e., I, you, she, he, and it) fits, then *who* is correct. If an objective pronoun (i.e., me, you, him, her, and it) fits, then *whom* is correct. Consider the following examples:

Original: Celeste, *who/whom* you all know, is the new project manager.
Re-written: You all know *her*.
{Because *her* is the object receiving the action, *whom* is correct}

Original: Refer to the directory to determine *who/whom* can assist you.
Re-written: *He* can assist you.
{*Because he* is the subject doing the action, *who* is correct}

your/you're

- *Your* means that you possess something
- *You're* is the contraction of "you are"

Example: Your performance suggests that you're ready for more challenging tasks. ✓

CAPITALIZATION & PUNCTUATION

Proper capitalization and punctuation are aspects of writing that are often neglected or not thoughtfully considered. However, even slight changes in punctuation and/or capitalization can change the meaning of a statement. This makes them important parts of conveying your message. This section will briefly describe *some* fundamental guidelines about punctuation and capitalization in business writing.

Capitalization

Capitalization provides a visual cue to readers that a particular word or group of words is important. The following table describes *some* fundamental guidelines about capitalization in business writing. There may be additional guidelines that are not described.

Needs Capitalization[3]	Example
First person singular pronoun "I"	**I** will conduct next week's training sessions.
First word in any statement (e.g., a sentence or a question)	**W**riting is important. **D**o you agree?
People's names	**G**eorge **C**ole is our Director of Administration.
Titles	George Cole is our **D**irector of **A**dministration.
Days of the week, months, and holidays	Our office is open **M**onday through **T**hursday.
Proper names of places (e.g., cities, counties, states, and countries)	The most populous county in the **U**nited **S**tates is the **C**ounty of **L**os **A**ngeles.
Proper names of historical periods/events and formally organized groups	The **S**upreme **C**ourt has ruled on many cases that affect our operations.
Proper names of races, ethnicities, nationalities, and languages	We have recently added **S**panish and **V**ietnamese translation services for our customers.
Names of businesses, trademarks, and brand names	Our office uses **M**icrosoft **W**ord.
Specific entities as opposed to non-specific entities (as determined by context)	Though there are 30 **d**epartments in our organization, that single **D**epartment has supplied six of the last seven Chief Executives.

Punctuation

Punctuation also provides visual cues to help readers understand statements. The following table lists the major types of punctuation marks and their general use in business writing. There may be additional uses that are not described.

Punctuation	Usage	Example
Period .	Ends a complete statement	The report is due tomorrow**.**
Question Mark ?	Ends a question or statement of doubt	How many residents are in your household**?**
Exclamation Point !	After interjections and complete statements to show extreme excitement or surprise	Wow**!** That's so interesting**!**

[3] Usually only the first letter of each word is capitalized. Prepositions (e.g., "of") and articles (e.g. "the") are typically not capitalized (e.g., Fourth <u>o</u>f July not Fourth <u>O</u>f July), unless they are at the beginning of a statement.

CAPITALIZATION & PUNCTUATION
(continued)

Punctuation	Usage	Example
Comma ,	To separate items in a series	We offer workbooks, seminars, and online courses.
	To separate a string of adjectives	The report is a clear, concise, well-planned document.
	To separate two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction	I was going to the meeting, but I changed my mind.
	After long introductory phrases	In order to correct the program before its launch, the supervisor had to check all passwords.
	Before quotations[4]	She said, "The content was timely."
	Between day of the month and year in dates	February 4, 2006
	Between city and state	Los Angeles, CA
	Before surname, degree, or title in names	Larry Jimenez, Sr.
	After conjunctive adverbs	She took several classes; therefore, she no longer refers to the operation guide.
Semicolon ;	To separate two closely-related main clauses	He was thorough; we all understood his presentation.
	To separate clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb	She took several classes; however, she still referred to the manual often.
	To separate a series of equal elements which themselves include commas	We met practitioners from Dallas, TX; Memphis, TN; and Philadelphia, PA.
Colon :	After headings in formal letters, memorandums, or other documents	Dear Sir:
	To separate hour and minute in time	8:00 a.m.
	Before a list preceded by a complete statement	Employees can choose from among four special committees: charitable giving, birthdays, recreation, and clubs.
	After a formal statement to mean "note what follows"	Every employee has a major responsibility: to provide outstanding customer service.
Apostrophe '	To indicate possessives	The managers' meeting is this morning.
	In contractions	The files weren't there.
	In numerals	The '09 budget is published online.
Parenthesis ( )	Around examples of information that illustrate or support the main text	The conference is in Hollywood (Florida, not California) this year.
	Around abbreviations	County of Los Angeles (CoLA)
Quotations " "	Around information quoted directly from some other source	Her feedback was that the content was "timely."
	Around words referred to as words or letters referred to as letters	Change every "client" to "customer" in the report.

[4] A comma is not needed when the quotation flows within the context of the statement, as illustrated below.
Comma Needed: She said, "The content was timely and informative."
Comma Not Needed: Her feedback was that the content was "timely and informative."

CAPITALIZATION & PUNCTUATION
(continued)

Other important guidelines for punctuating business documents are provided below:

Avoid contractions in formal business documents.

Example: We weren't able to acquire additional software licenses. ✗
We were unable to acquire additional software licenses. ✓

Possessive pronouns do not require apostrophes to show possession.

Example: Since your directory has not arrived, ask Terry if you can borrow her's. ✗
Since your directory has not arrived, ask Terry if you can borrow hers. ✓

Be careful about the placement of the apostrophe and "s" to form possessive words.

Example: The manager's presentation is tomorrow. ✓
{"Manager" is singular, so an "s" and an apostrophe are needed to form the possessive}

The managers' presentation is tomorrow. ✓
{"Managers" is plural, so only an apostrophe is needed to form the possessive}

Note: These examples apply to many, but not all, words. For example, to form the possessive of the plural word "children," you would add an apostrophe and an "s" at the end (i.e., "children's"). Similarly, to form the possessive of singular words that end in "s" like "boss," you would add an apostrophe and an "s" at the end (i.e., "boss's").

Remember the last comma when listing items in a series.

Though some style guides (e.g., Associated Press) state that a comma should not be placed before the conjunction in a series of items (i.e., before the last item), typical business practices require that the comma be included in order to prevent misunderstandings.

Example: The cases will be distributed evenly among Maria, Bill, Olga and Leon. ✗
{Without the comma, it is unclear whether the cases will be split four or three ways}

The cases will be distributed evenly among Maria, Bill, Olga, and Leon. ✓
{The last comma clearly indicates that the cases will be split four ways}

CONCLUSION

This guide provided information about *some* of the fundamental rules and guidelines of business writing. As shown in the following revision to the poorly-written memorandum provided at the beginning of this guide, applying knowledge of noun/pronoun agreement, subject/verb agreement, misplaced/dangling modifiers, style, word usage, capitalization, and punctuation can help ensure that people who read your documents have a clear understanding of your message.

> November 1, 2009
>
> To: All Staff
>
> From: Approvals Committee Workgroup
>
> Subject: Updates on New Approvals System
>
> After many months of development and testing, the new approvals system will launch on November 22. It will address current and projected increases in the number of approval requests received from clients. The system will benefit four divisions in particular: budget, administration, operations, and staffing.
>
> One notable advantage of the system is an improved internal communication process. Currently, we email communications about new requests and mail communications about revised requests. However, once implemented, the new system will directly email communications about all requests. The subject of the system emails will be "Updates: Approval Request No. ___" to help you better identify and track communications.
>
> We will provide a user guide (accessible from any workstation at any time) that includes example scenarios for using the system. Additionally, we will conduct focus group meetings to obtain your feedback about the system. We have emailed you a tentative agenda in .pdf file format for the January 13, 2010 focus group meeting.
>
> If you have any questions about the system, please contact the Help Desk.

For practice applying the information described in this guide, please visit the Test Preparation System (TPS). This website includes several written expression practice tests and other resources to assist those preparing for a County of Los Angeles written employment test. TPS is available on the Department of Human Resources website (http://hr.lacounty.gov) by clicking on "Job Information" and then on "Employment Test Preparation."

Additional Resources

Reading this guide is a good step toward understanding how to write well. To help you gain a deeper understanding of the larger body of knowledge about good writing (e.g., how to organize statements into paragraphs and tailor your message to the audience), you may consider seeking additional information. Other resources (e.g., books, college courses, workshops, seminars, Internet resources) are available to help expand your understanding.

Feedback
In order to assist us in enhancing this document, we would greatly appreciate your feedback. Please email any suggestions to testprep@hr.lacounty.gov. In the subject line of your email, please write "English Usage Guide." Thank you in advance for your response.

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GLOSSARY

Adjective	A word that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun. An adjective usually precedes the noun or the pronoun it modifies, as illustrated in the following statement: • Regional supervisors prepare quarterly reports. {"Regional" modifies the noun "supervisors" and "quarterly" modifies the noun "reports"}
Adverb	A word that modifies verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. An adverb describes "how," "when," "where," and "how much." The following statements include adverbs: • We regularly distribute project updates. {"Regularly" modifies the verb "distribute"} • The recently posted flyers announce the new location. {"Recently" modifies the adjective "posted" which modifies the noun "flyers"} • We somewhat regularly distribute project updates. {"Somewhat" modifies the adverb "regularly" which modifies the verb "distribute"} A *conjunctive adverb* is a special type of adverb that joins complete ideas to show comparison, contrast, cause-effect, sequence, or other relationships. Examples: accordingly, also, consequently, finally, furthermore, hence, however, incidentally, indeed, instead, likewise, meanwhile, nevertheless, next, nonetheless, otherwise, still, then, therefore, thus The following statements include conjunctive adverbs: • The orientation has been cancelled; therefore, we will be able to attend the meeting. {"Therefore" joins the two statements and shows a cause-effect relationship} • We submitted the requisitions after the deadline; nevertheless, we still received the supplies. {"Nevertheless" joins the two statements and shows a contrast relationship}

GLOSSARY

Conjunction

A word that links words, phrases, and clauses in a statement. The following are two types of conjunctions:

- *Coordinating Conjunctions* – link individual words and independent clauses to indicate that the connected words and clauses have equal importance.

  Examples:
  and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet

  The following statements include coordinating conjunctions:

  - Joey <u>and</u> Bill will represent our unit at the seminar. {"And" links the words "Joey" and "Bill" as equals}
  - The contract was signed last week, <u>but</u> it will not become effective until next year. {"But" links the independent clauses that are equally important}

- *Subordinating Conjunctions* – introduce dependent clauses and indicate that the independent clauses they are linked to are more important.

  Examples:
  after, although, as, because, before, how, if, once, since, than, that, though, until, when, where, whether, while

  The following statements include subordinating conjunctions:

  - <u>After</u> we receive your application, we will evaluate your qualifications for the position. {"After" shows the relationship between receiving the application and evaluating the qualifications}
  - The attendees will not receive the materials <u>until</u> they check-in at the front desk. {"Until" shows the relationship between receiving the materials and checking-in}

Interjection

A word that is added to a statement to convey emotion. They are not used typically in formal written communications, though they may be used in direct quotations. The following statement includes an interjection:

- The employee exclaimed, "<u>Wow</u>, thank you," when we surprised him with the attendance award. {"Wow" conveys the employee's emotion}

GLOSSARY

Noun	A word that names a person, place, or thing. There are many different types of nouns, some of which are described below: • *Common Nouns* – name a person, place, or thing in a *general* sense. Examples: president, city, department • *Proper Nouns* – name a specific person, place, or thing. They are always capitalized. Examples: George Washington, Los Angeles, Transportation Department • *Collective Nouns* – name a group of persons, places, or things. The group is considered to be a single unit. Examples: team, workgroup, jury
Part of Speech	The traditional term that describes the category into which each word in the English language can be classified. There are eight major parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition, and interjection. A word's part of speech depends on its context within a given statement (i.e., how it relates to other words in the statement). Thus, the same word can be classified as different parts of speech in different statements. For example, the word "interview" could be a noun in one statement (e.g., The interview is tomorrow), and a verb in another statement (e.g., We will interview him).
Phrase	A group of words that focus on an idea, but which do not have a subject, a verb, or both. The following statement includes a phrase: • The photocopier, pulling paper from multiple bins, is processing the job slowly." {" Pulling paper from multiple bins" is a phrase; it does not have a subject}
Preposition	A word that links nouns, pronouns, and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the *object of the preposition*. The whole phrase, in turn, acts as an adjective or an adverb to locate something in time and space, or tell when, where, or under what conditions something happened. Examples: about, after, against, among, around, at, before, between, despite, during, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, onto, over, past, since, through, to, under, until, up, upon, with, within, without The following statement includes a prepositional phrase: • The presenter's biography was read aloud during the conference. {In the prepositional phrase "during the conference," "during" is the preposition and "conference" is the object. The entire phrase tells when the biography was read}

GLOSSARY

Pronoun A word that replaces a noun. When you write multiple statements about a given person, place, or thing, pronouns help to make the statements less repetitive or awkward. The following statements illustrate the usefulness of this part of speech:

- After he received the notice, Mr. Hu called to discuss his options. {With pronouns}
- After Mr. Hu received the notice, Mr. Hu called to discuss Mr. Hu's options. {Without pronouns}

There are many different types of pronouns, some of which are described below:

- *Personal Pronouns* – replace nouns that name persons.

  Examples:
  I, you, he, we

- *Demonstrative Pronouns* – identify nouns by answering "Which one?"

  Examples:
  this, that, these, those

  "This" and "these" reference nouns that are nearby in space or time, and "that" and "those" reference nouns farther away in space and time. The following statements include demonstrative pronouns:

  - This will be the committee's first opportunity to meet. {"This" perhaps replaces "tomorrow's meeting," which is nearby in time}
  - That will be the committee's first opportunity to meet. {"That" perhaps replaces "next year's meeting," which is farther away in time}

- *Indefinite Pronouns* – refer to an identifiable, but not specified person, place, or thing. They convey "How much?" or "How many?"

  Examples:
  all, any, anyone, anything, each, everyone, everything, few, many, none, several

- *Interrogative Pronouns* – used to ask questions.

  Examples:
  who, whom, which, what

  Generally, "who" and "whom" refer to people, and "which" and "what" refer to things. The following statements include interrogative pronouns:

  - Whom should we ask to present the award?
  - Which computer can the temporary employee use today?

- *Reflexive Pronouns* – refer back to the subject of the sentence or clause.

  Examples:
  myself, yourself, himself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves

GLOSSARY

Sentence	A group of words that expresses a complete thought. All sentences must have a subject and a verb. A verb shows action or state of being. The subject answers "Who?" or "What?" about the verb. For example, consider the following sentences:
	• Her secretary typed the letter.
	    o Verb → What is the action? *Typed*
	    o Subject → Who or what performed this action? *Her secretary*
	• The paperwork is due tomorrow.
	    o Verb → What is the state of being? *Is*
	    o Subject → Who or what is in this state of being? *The paperwork*

Verb	A word that expresses action or state of being. The two types of verbs can be described as the following:
	• *Action Verbs* – express something that a person, force of nature, or thing can physically do.
	    Examples:
	    answer, consider, open
	• *Linking Verbs* – connect the subject of a verb to additional information about the subject. These types of verbs relate to a state of being.
	    Examples:
	    be, become, seem, and sometimes appear, feel, grow

Appendix O

County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
Workforce Planning, Test Research, and Appeals Division
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Los Angeles, CA 90010
24-hour Jobline: (800) 970-LIST
http://dhr.lacounty.info

Basic Arithmetic
Study Guide & Sample Test Questions
Version 1

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in employment with the County of Los Angeles. This guide is designed to familiarize and assist you with preparing for examinations containing multiple-choice basic arithmetic items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of basic arithmetic items you may encounter in County tests. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested.

ABOUT THE COUNTY'S EXAMINATIONS

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the County of Los Angeles takes steps to ensure that our exam content is job-related. We conduct studies to determine the knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assist us in developing the content of our examinations. Testing applicants for jobs provides us with an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of our applicants.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE WRITTEN TEST?

To prepare for the written test, you should study the concepts assessed in each section. It is likely that there will be several sections to the written test in addition to arithmetic; thus, it is to your benefit to carefully read the job bulletin to determine the knowledge, skill, and ability areas the written test will cover. In addition, it is important that you read the entire written test notice for the location and time of the written test as well as for parking instructions and other important information. Pay special attention to whether testing aids/materials such as handheld calculators are allowed in the written test. If the test notice indicates that testing aids/materials are allowed, then you are strongly advised to bring these with you, as they <u>will not</u> be provided. On the test day, it is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes prior to the test's starting time, wear comfortable clothes, bring an accurate watch, and make sure you are well-rested. Also, remember to bring your test notice and a picture I.D. such as a driver license, or you may not be admitted into the test!

<u>NOTE</u>: Applicants who require special testing arrangements such as readers or interpreters must provide seven (7) days advance notice of their disability and requested accommodation. Check the front side of the job bulletin for telephone numbers to call and make disability accommodation requests. The County will attempt to meet reasonable accommodation requests whenever possible.

TEST-TAKING TIPS

Most County examinations have a set time limit, so it is important that you work quickly, but not so fast as to become careless. Always read all the possible choices before selecting your answer. If you do not know the answer to a problem, it is usually best to skip it and move on to the others. Note that on most County examinations, your score is based on the number of correct responses. If you are not sure of the answer to a problem, eliminate the answers you believe are wrong, and mark the choice that is your best response. Above all, budget your time, pace yourself, and avoid getting bogged down on any single question.

SAMPLE BASIC ARITHMETIC QUESTIONS

Basic arithmetic items test your knowledge of, and ability to interpret and solve problems of a mathematical nature, using such operations as addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication, and in a variety of problem formats and situations. However, actual problems will vary from one test to another. For example, a test problem may require you to calculate the totals in a supply budget, much like you may be asked to do in the position for which you are testing. The following are examples of the types of basic arithmetic problems most common to County examinations. Answers and explanations for the problems begin on page 8 of this study guide. A glossary of mathematical terms has also been included on page 7 for your reference.

1.
$$\begin{array}{rl} 4 \text{ feet, } 5\tfrac{1}{4} & \text{inches} \\ 30 \text{ feet, } 6 & \text{inches} \\ 10 \text{ feet, } 2 & \text{inches} \\ + \quad 3\tfrac{3}{4} & \text{inches} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

A. 44 feet, 11 inches
B. 45 feet, 5 inches
C. 46 feet, 2 inches
D. 47 feet, 1 inches

2.
$$\begin{array}{r} 246 \\ \times \ 132 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

A. 32,472
B. 34,272
C. 35,242
D. 36,422

3.
$$\begin{array}{r} 45. \\ .9 \\ 436.005 \\ 1168. \\ + \quad .64532 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

A. 1648.55063
B. 1649.63082
C. 1650.55032
D. 1750.60232

4. 9/10 – 3/20

A. 3/4
B. 4/5
C. 4/15
D. 5/15

5.

	9 days,	18 hours,	37 minutes
	5 days,	16 hours,	16 minutes
	2 days,	15 hours,	13 minutes
+		10 hours,	11 minutes

A. 17 days, 30 hours, 16 minutes
B. 18 days, 12 hours, 17 minutes
C. 18 days, 15 hours, 27 minutes
D. 19 days, 20 hours, 57 minutes

6. 65 is what percent of 500?

A. 6
B. 8
C. 11
D. 13

7. Juanita's salary is $2,650.00 per month. If she receives a salary increase of 5%, what is her new monthly salary?

A. $2,782.50
B. $2,785.00
C. $2,900.00
D. $3,001.50

8. If 43 of the 148 reams of paper purchased by a department are used, what is the percentage that remains? Round your answer to the nearest whole percent.

A. 71%
B. 72%
C. 73%
D. 75%

9. If two-thirds of Sam's weekly income is $480, what is one-fourth of his weekly income?

A. $165
B. $180
C. $240
D. $280

10. A 9' x 15' tool room was enlarged to 11' x 20'. How many square feet of floor space were added?

A. 70 square feet
B. 75 square feet
C. 80 square feet
D. 85 square feet

11. In July, 305 employees worked on an assembly line. In August, 30 employees resigned and 11 were hired. In September, 9 employees resigned and 23 were hired. In October, 17 employees were hired. What was the total number of employees as of November 1st?

A. 302
B. 309
C. 317
D. 325

12. In a Social Services Agency, each of the 18 employees is responsible for maintaining a caseload of 360 cases. When 3 employees leave the department, their caseload is redistributed equally among the remaining employees. How many cases are each of the remaining employees now responsible for maintaining?

A. 405
B. 432
C. 468
D. 472

13. Fred's gross salary is $850 per week. From his salary, 11% is removed for federal deductions; 5.5% for state deductions; and 6.2% for the company's pension plan. If each of these deductions is taken as a percent of Fred's gross salary, what is his net salary for a four-week period?

A. $2,108.00
B. $2,343.80
C. $2,628.20
D. $3,189.40

14. Ernesto takes out a loan from his retirement fund. If he is repaying the loan in installments of $72.12 every two weeks, how much of the loan will be paid back in 32 weeks?

A. $1,081.80
B. $1,153.92
C. $1,276.48
D. $1,730.88

15. Martha can file 50 letters in 10 minutes. David can file 40 letters in the same amount of time. How many letters will the two of them file in 9 hours?

A. 4,860
B. 4,870
C. 4,950
D. 4,980

16. Four machines, each costing $5,700, were purchased for an office. Each machine requires the service of an operator at a salary of $1,100 per month. These machines are to replace 8 clerks, two of whom each earn $750 per month, three of whom each earn $650 per month, and three of whom each earn $950 per month. How many months will it take to recover the cost of the machines?

A. 10 months
B. 11 months
C. 12 months
D. More than 12 months

17. An Information Services Manager is purchasing a large number of word processing software licenses at a cost of $125 each. The software company gives a volume discount of 3.5% for large purchases. If the department manager has a budget of $17,300 to purchase the licenses, approximately how many licenses can she purchase?

A. 122
B. 138
C. 143
D. 146

18. An employee who earned $550 a week working 35 hours had her pay increased by 5 percent. Later, her hours were reduced to 30 per week, but the new hourly rate of pay was retained. What was her new amount of weekly pay?

A. $475.50
B. $495.00
C. $525.75
D. $550.00

19. If Kim reduces the weekly number of hours she works by one-fourth and her current weekly income is $520.00, what is her new weekly income?

A. $285.00
B. $335.00
C. $360.00
D. $390.00

20. Pamela's salary is $3125.00 per month. If she receives a salary increase of 5%, her new monthly salary is

A. $3158.90.
B. $3197.50.
C. $3215.65.
D. $3281.25.

GLOSSARY OF MATHEMATICAL TERMS

Area:	The number of square units that covers a shape or figure.
Denominator:	The bottom part of a fraction. (Example: in the fraction ¾, 4 is the denominator.)
Digit:	The ten numerals 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The number 14 has two digits: 1 and 4.
Difference:	The result of subtracting one number from another.
Divisor:	In a division problem, the number that is divided into another (For example when dividing 4 into 20, the 4 would be the divisor, as it is used to divide the number 20 into five parts).
Factor:	One of two or more numerical values that are multiplied together to yield a product.
Fraction:	A number expressed in terms of a numerator and denominator.
Least Common Multiple:	The smallest, non-zero multiple of the denominators of two or more fractions.
Numerator:	The top part of a fraction. (Example, in the fraction ¾ 3 is the numerator).
Operation:	Any one of the basic arithmetic functions of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division.
Product:	The result of two numbers being multiplied together.
Quotient:	The result of dividing one number into another.
Sum:	The result of adding together two or more numbers.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO ARITHMETIC SAMPLE QUESTIONS

NOTE: Typically, there are multiple ways of obtaining the correct answer to each question, only one of which is provided as the answer explanation. Use the glossary on page 7 to help you define any terms with which you may be unfamiliar.

1. **Correct Answer: B**
   - Add the measurements in the inches column, for a total of 17 inches (Step #1).
   - Since 12 inches equals 1 foot, convert the 17 inches to 1 foot, 5 inches; carry the 1 foot into the feet measurement column; and sum (Step #2).

STEP #1

$$\begin{array}{lrl} & \text{4 feet, } 5\frac{1}{4} & \text{inches} \\ & \text{30 feet, } 6 & \text{inches} \\ & \text{10 feet, } 2 & \text{inches} \\ + & 3\frac{3}{4} & \text{inches} \\ \hline & 17 & \text{inches} \end{array}$$

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{lrl} & \textit{1 foot} & \\ & \text{4 feet, } 5\frac{1}{4} & \text{inches} \\ & \text{30 feet, } 6 & \text{inches} \\ & \text{10 feet, } 2 & \text{inches} \\ + & 3\frac{3}{4} & \text{inches} \\ \hline & \text{45 feet, } 5 & \text{inches} \end{array}$$

2. **Correct Answer: A**
   - Working from right to left, multiply 246 by each of the three digits in the factor "132" separately. You may wish to add zero placeholders (shown in bold) to help ensure that columns are aligned correctly (Step #1).
   - Add the products from Step #1 to arrive at the correct answer (Step #2).

STEP #1

$$\begin{array}{lr} & 246 \\ \times & 132 \\ \hline & 492 \\ & 738\mathbf{0} \\ & 246\mathbf{00} \end{array}$$

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{lr} & 246 \\ \times & 132 \\ \hline & 492 \\ & 738\mathbf{0} \\ + & 246\mathbf{00} \\ \hline & 32472 \end{array}$$

3. **Correct Answer: C**

- Set up the problem by adding zero placeholders (shown in bold) as necessary to ensure that columns and decimal points are aligned appropriately (Step #1).
- Working right to left, add each column, making sure to carry values over to the next column to the left as appropriate (Step #2).

STEP #1

0045.00000
0000.9**0000**
0436.005**00**
1168.**00000**
+**0000**.64532

STEP #2

 111 1
0045.00000
0000.9**0000**
0436.005**00**
1168.**00000**
+**0000**.64532
1650.55032

4. **Correct Answer: A**

- To solve, find the least common multiple (LCM) for the denominator of each fraction. The LCM is the smallest non-zero number that is a multiple of both denominators. In this problem, the LCM is 20.
- Since 3/20 already has a denominator of 20, only 9/10 needs to be converted so that it has a denominator of 20. Multiplying the denominator (10) by 2 converts it to 20; therefore, to convert the fraction 9/10, multiply both the numerator (9) and the denominator (10) by 2, so that the fraction becomes 18/20 (Step #1).
- Subtract 3/20 from 18/20 (by subtracting the numerators), for a difference of 15/20 (Step #2).
- Simplify 15/20 by dividing the numerator and denominator each by 5, to equal 3/4 (Step #3).

STEP #1

$$\frac{9\text{x}2}{10\text{x}2} = \frac{18}{20}$$

STEP #2

$$\frac{18}{20} - \frac{3}{20} = \frac{15}{20}$$

STEP #3

$$\frac{15 \div 5}{20 \div 5} = \frac{3}{4}$$

5. **Correct Answer: B**

- Add the measurements in the minutes column for a total of 77 minutes (Step #1).
- Since 60 minutes equals 1 hour, convert the 77 minutes from Step #1 into 1 hour, 17 minutes; carry the 1 hour into the hours measurement column; and sum for a total of 60 hours, 17 minutes (Step #2).
- Since 24 hours equals 1 day, convert the 60 hours from Step #2 into 2 days, 12 hours; carry the 2 days into the days measurement column; and sum for a total of 18 days (Step #3).

STEP #1

	9 days,	18 hours,	37 minutes
	5 days,	16 hours,	16 minutes
	2 days,	15 hours,	13 minutes
+		10 hours,	11 minutes
			77 minutes

STEP #2

		1 hour	
	9 days,	18 hours,	37 minutes
	5 days,	16 hours,	16 minutes
	2 days,	15 hours,	13 minutes
+		10 hours,	11 minutes
		60 hours,	17 minutes

STEP #3

	2 days	*1 hour*	
	9 days,	18 hours,	37 minutes
	5 days,	16 hours,	16 minutes
	2 days,	15 hours,	13 minutes
+		10 hours,	11 minutes
	18 days,	12 hours,	17 minutes

6. **Correct Answer: D**

- Divide 65 by 500. Set up the problem by adding a decimal and zero placeholders (shown in bold) to make 65 into 65.**00**. Next, determine the decimal place for the answer by counting the number of zero placeholders you added to 65 to make it divisible by 500. Since two zeros were added to 65, count backwards from right to left two decimal places to convert the answer to .13 (Step #1).
- Multiply .13 by 100 to convert it to a percent. Add a decimal point and two zero placeholders (shown in bold) to make 100 into 100.**00** to match the number of decimal places in the number it is being multiplied with (.13) and vertically align the decimal points in the two numbers. Count the number of decimal places to the right of the decimal point in 100.**00** and .13 (which equals four) to determine that the answer should also have four decimal places. Count backwards from right to left four places and insert a decimal point, which results in 13.0000, or 13 (Step #2).

STEP #1

```
       .13
500 | 65.00
     -50.0
      15.00
      15.00
          0
```

STEP #2

```
  100.00
x    .13
   30000
 +10000
  130000

 13.0000
```

7. **<u>Correct Answer</u>: A**

- Multiply $2,650.00 by the decimal equivalent of 5% (.05) to determine that $132.50 is the amount of the salary increase (Step #1).
- Add $132.50 to Juanita's previous monthly salary ($2,650) to determine that $2,782.50 is her new monthly salary (Step #2).

<u>STEP #1</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} \$2650.00 \\ \times \quad .05 \\ \hline \$132.50 \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #2</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} \$2650.00 \\ + \ \$\ 132.50 \\ \hline \$2782.50 \end{array}$$

8. **<u>Correct Answer</u>: A**

- Determine the number of reams of papers that remain by subtracting 43 from 148, to equal 105 (Step #1).
- Determine what percentage of 148 equals 105 by dividing 105 by 148 for an answer of .7094, which is rounded to 71% (Step #2).

<u>STEP #1</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 148 \\ -\ 43 \\ \hline 105 \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #2</u>

$$\frac{105}{148} = .7094 = 71\%$$

9. **<u>Correct Answer</u>: B**

- Since $480 is two-thirds of Sam's weekly income, divide 480 by 2 to determine that $240 is one-third of his weekly income (Step #1).
- Multiply $240 by 3 to determine that $720 is his weekly income (Step #2).
- Divide $720 by 4 to determine that $180 is one-fourth of his weekly income (Step #3).

<u>STEP #1</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 240 \\ 2\overline{)480} \\ -4 \\ \hline 08 \\ -8 \\ \hline 00 \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #2</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 240 \\ \times \quad 3 \\ \hline 720 \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #3</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 180 \\ 4\overline{)720} \\ -4 \\ \hline 32 \\ -32 \\ \hline 00 \end{array}$$

10. **Correct Answer: D**

- Find the total area of both the original tool room and the enlarged tool room (Step #1). The formula for area is A = L x W, where A = area; L= length; and W = width. The product is expressed in square feet.
- Subtract the area of the original tool room from the area of the enlarged tool room to determine the amount of floor space that was added (Step #2).

STEP #1

Original tool room: 9' × 15' = 135 square feet

Enlarged tool room: 11' × 20' = 220 square feet

STEP #2

220 – 135 = 85 square feet

11. **Correct Answer: C**

- Subtract the total number of employees who resigned since July from the number of employees on the assembly line in July (Step #1).
- Add the total number of hires since July to the answer from Step #1 to determine the number of employees on the assembly line as of November 1st (Step #2).

	305	(number of employees in July)
STEP #1	- 39	(total number resigned from August through October)
	266	
STEP #2	+ 51	(total number hired from August through October)
	317	

12. **Correct Answer: B**

- Multiply the total number of cases per employee (360) by the total number of employees (18) to determine the total number of cases (Step #1).
- Divide the total number of cases (6480) by the remaining employees (15) to determine the number of cases per employee (Step #2).

STEP #1

$$\begin{array}{r} 360 \\ \times \quad 18 \\ \hline 2880 \\ +\ 360 \\ \hline 6480 \end{array}$$

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{r} 432 \\ 15\overline{)6480} \\ -60 \\ \hline 48 \\ -45 \\ \hline 30 \\ -30 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

13. **Correct Answer: C**

- Multiply Fred's gross salary by the decimal equivalent of each percent deduction to get the dollar amount for each deduction; sum the three deductions (Step #1).
- Subtract the sum of the deductions from Fred's weekly gross salary to get his net salary (Step #2).
- Multiply Fred's weekly net salary by 4 to get his net pay for the four-week period (Step #3).

STEP #1

$850.00 x 0.11	=	$93.50
$850.00 x 0.055	=	$46.75
$850.00 x 0.062	=	$52.70
		$192.95

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{r} \$850.00 \\ -\ \$192.95 \\ \hline \$657.05 \end{array}$$

STEP #3

$$\begin{array}{r} \$657.0 \\ \times \quad 4 \\ \hline \$2628.20 \end{array}$$

14. **Correct Answer: B**

- Divide 32 by 2 to determine the total number of payments made during the 32-week period (Step #1).
- Multiply the number of payments (16) by the payment amount ($72.12) to determine the total amount paid back at the end of the 32-week period (Step #2).

STEP #1

$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ 2\overline{)\,32} \\ -\ 2 \\ \hline 12 \\ -\ 12 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{r} 72.12 \\ \times \quad 16 \\ \hline 43272 \\ +\ 7212\ \ \\ \hline 1153.92 \end{array}$$

15. **Correct Answer: A**

- Divide 50 by 10 to determine the number of letters that Martha can file in one minute. Do the same for David by dividing 40 by 10; sum these amounts to determine the total number of letters these workers can file in <u>one minute</u> (Step #1).
- Multiply the total number of letters per minute (9) by the total number of minutes in one hour (60) to determine the total number of letters that Martha and David can file in <u>one hour</u> (Step #2).
- Multiply the total number of letters per hour that Martha and David can file by the number of hours these workers will spend filing letters (Step #3).

STEP #1

Martha:	50 ÷ 10 =	5 letters per minute
David:	40 ÷ 10 =	4 letters per minute
		9 letters per minute

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{r} 60 \\ \times \quad 9 \\ \hline 540 \end{array}$$

STEP #3

$$\begin{array}{r} 540 \\ \times \quad 9 \\ \hline 4860 \end{array}$$

16. **Correct Answer: C**

- Multiply the cost of each machine ($5,700) by 4 to determine that the total purchase cost is $22,800.
- Multiply the monthly salaries for each of the four operators ($1,100) by 4 to determine that the total monthly labor cost to operate the four machines is $4,400.
- Multiply the number of clerks by their respective monthly salary rate to determine that $6,300 is the total monthly labor cost for the eight clerks as follows:

  $(2 \times \$750) + (3 \times \$650) + (3 \times \$950) = \$6,300$.
- Subtract the total salaries for the operators ($4,400) from the total clerk salaries ($6,300) to determine that the amount of monthly labor cost savings is $1,900.
- Divide the total cost of the machines ($22,800) by the total monthly savings ($1,900) to determine that it will take 12 months to recover the cost of the machines.

17. **Correct Answer: C**

- Multiply the pre-discount cost per license ($125) by the decimal equivalent of the percent discount (.035) to determine that $4.38 (rounded) is the total savings per license.
- Subtract the total discount per license ($4.38) from the pre-discount cost per license ($125) to determine that $120.62 is the discounted cost per license.
- Divide the total budgeted amount for licenses ($17,300) by the discounted cost per license ($120.62) to determine that 143 licenses can be purchased within the current budget.

18. **Correct Answer: B**

- Multiply the original weekly wage ($550) by the decimal equivalent of 5 percent (.05) to determine that $27.50 is the amount of the increase.
- Add the amount of the increase ($27.50) to the original weekly wage ($550) to determine that $577.50 is the new weekly wage.
- Divide the new weekly wage ($577.50) by 35 to determine that $16.50 is the new hourly rate.
- Multiply the new hourly rate ($16.50) by 30 to determine that $495.00 is the new amount of weekly pay.

19. **Correct Answer: D**

- Convert the fraction one-fourth (¼) to a decimal by dividing the numerator in the fraction (1) by the denominator (4). Set up the problem by adding a decimal point and zero placeholders (shown in bold), to make 1 into 1.**00**. Next, determine the decimal place for the answer by counting the number of zeros you added to 1 to make it divisible by 4. Since two zeros were added to 1, count backwards from right to left two decimal places to convert the answer to .25 (Step #1).
- Multiply .25 by $520 to determine that $130.00 is one-fourth of Kim's weekly income. You may wish to add zero placeholders (shown in bold) to ensure that columns are aligned correctly (Step #2).
- Subtract $130.00 from $520.00 to get $390.00, which is Kim's new weekly income (Step #3).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*	*STEP #3*
.25		
4 ⟌ 1.**00**	520	$520.00
-0.8	x .25	-$130.00
.20	2600	$390.00
-.20	+1040**0**	
0	13000	
	$130.00	

20. **Correct Answer: D**

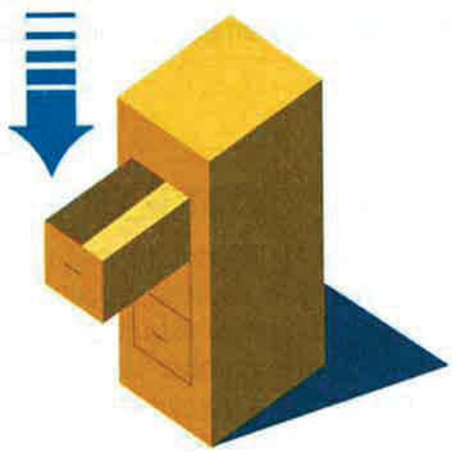
- Convert 5% to a decimal by dividing 5 by 100. Set up the problem by adding a decimal point and zero placeholders (shown in bold), to make 5 into 5.**00**. Next, determine the decimal place for the answer by counting the number of zeros you added to 5 to make it divisible by 100. Since two zeros were added to 5, count backwards from right to left two decimal places and place a 0 before the 5 to convert the answer to .05 (Step #1).
- Multiply $3125.00 by .05 to determine the amount of Pamela's pay raise, to yield an answer of $156.25 (Step #2).
- Making sure to carry values over across columns as necessary, add $156.25 to Pamela's previous salary for the sum of $3281.25, her new monthly salary (Step #3).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*	*STEP #3*
.05		*1*
100 ⟌ 5.**00**	$ 3125.00	$3125.00
-5.00	x .05	+$ 156.25
0	$156.2500	$3281.25

Appendix P

County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
Workforce Planning, Test Research, and Appeals Division
3333 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 350
Los Angeles, CA 90010
24-hour Jobline: (800) 970-LIST
http://dhr.lacounty.info

Clerical
Study Guide & Sample Test Questions
Version 1



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in employment with the County of Los Angeles. This booklet is designed to familiarize and assist you with preparing for tests containing multiple-choice entry-level clerical items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of clerical items you may encounter in County tests. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested.

ABOUT THE COUNTY'S EXAMINATIONS

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the County of Los Angeles takes steps to ensure that our exam content is job-related. We conduct studies to determine the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assist us in developing the content of our examinations. Pre-employment testing provides us with an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of our applicants.

NOTE: Applicants who require special testing arrangements such as readers or interpreters must provide seven (7) days advance notice of their disability and requested accommodation. Check the front side of the job bulletin for telephone numbers to call to make disability accommodation requests. The County will attempt to meet reasonable accommodation requests whenever possible.

TEST-TAKING TIPS

Most County tests have a set time limit, so it is important that you work quickly, but not so fast as to become careless. Always read all the possible choices before marking your answer. If you do not know the answer to a problem, it is usually best to skip it and move on to the others. Note that on most County tests, your score is based on the number of correct responses. If you are not sure of the answer to a problem, eliminate the answers you believe are wrong, and mark the choice that is your best response. Above all, budget your time, pace yourself, and avoid getting bogged down on any single question.

On test day, it is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes prior to the test's starting time, wear comfortable clothes, bring an accurate watch, and make sure you are well-rested. Also, remember to bring your test notice and a picture I.D. such as a driver license, or you may not be admitted into the test!

Ability to File

INSTRUCTIONS: For questions 1-15, find the answer to the alphabetical and numerical examples shown. Items are arranged for alphabetical filing by *last name*, then by *first name*, from A to Z. Items are arranged for numerical filing from *lowest* to *highest* value.

1. If the names Humberto Castillo, Pedro Castaneda, Norma Cortez, and Silvia Campos were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

   A. first.
   B. second.
   C. third.
   D. fourth.

   ANSWER: The order would be Silvia Campos, Pedro Castaneda, Humberto Castillo, and Norma Cortez. The underlined name is third; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

2. If the names Sara Lewis, Steve Leung, Mary Lopez, and Tom Lee were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

   A. first.
   B. second.
   C. third.
   D. fourth.

   ANSWER: The order would be Tom Lee, Steve Leung, Sara Lewis, and Mary Lopez. The underlined name is first; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

3. If the names Alan Mayfield, Barbara Mackey, Steve Mayer, and Marie Martinez were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be Barbara Mackey, Marie Martinez, Steve Mayer, and Alan Mayfield. The underlined name is second; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

4. If the names Lillian Chang, Lionel Chandler, Linda Chavez, and Lin Chase were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be Lionel Chandler, Lillian Chang, Lin Chase, and Linda Chavez. The underlined name is second; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

5. If the names Charlotte Ramsey, Mark Reagan, Elisa Regalado, and Eric Ramos were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be Eric Ramos, Charlotte Ramsey, Mark Reagan, and Elisa Regalado. The underlined name is third; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

6. If the names Debra Willis, John Williams, Anthony Wilson, and Robert Williamson were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be John Williams, Robert Williamson, Debra Willis, and Anthony Wilson. The underlined name is third; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

7. If the names Sandra Davis, Kathy Donaldson, Larry Dees, and Teresa Diaz were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be Sandra Davis, Larry Dees, Teresa Diaz, and Kathy Donaldson. The underlined name is fourth; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

8. If the names Anthony Estrada, Mark Everett, Robert Emerson, and Debra Evans were arranged for alphabetical filing, the position of the underlined name would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be Robert Emerson, Anthony Estrada, Debra Evans, and Mark Everett. The underlined name is first; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

9. If the numerical sequences 51.56847, 522.2849, 5.45879, and 0.51274 were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the underlined sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be 0.51274, 5.45879, 51.56847, and 522.2849. The underlined sequence is third; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

10. If the numerical sequences 389452, 326.151, 3.89456, and 31.9659 were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the underlined sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be 3.89456, 31.9659, 326.151, and 389452. The underlined sequence is fourth; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

11. If the numerical sequences 4.548, 4.5482, 4.5399, and 4.5521 were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the underlined sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be 4.5399, 4.548, 4.5482, and 4.5521. The underlined sequence is second; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

12. If the numerical sequences 10.0126, 10.016, 10.01, and <u>10.0026</u> were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the <u>underlined</u> sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be <u>10.0026</u>, 10.01, 10.0126, and 10.016. The <u>underlined</u> sequence is <u>first</u>; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

13. If the numerical sequences <u>637.2081</u>, 638.762, 637.2100, and 637.2019 were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the <u>underlined</u> sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be 637.2019, <u>637.2081</u>, 637.2100, and 638.762. The <u>underlined</u> sequence is <u>second</u>; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

14. If the numerical sequences <u>0.5661</u>, 0.5992, 0.5562, and 0.5600 were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the <u>underlined</u> sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be 0.5562, 0.5600, <u>0.5661</u>, and 0.5992. The <u>underlined</u> sequence is <u>third</u>; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

15. If the numerical sequences 7258.58, 7258.09, 7258.12, and 7258.1 were arranged for numerical filing, the position of the underlined sequence would be

A. first.
B. second.
C. third.
D. fourth.

ANSWER: The order would be 7258.09, 7258.1, 7258.12, and 7258.58. The underlined sequence is first; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

Checking for Errors

INSTRUCTIONS: For questions 16-30, compare the COPY with its ORIGINAL and count the number of errors you find in the COPY. When the order of two numbers or letters is reversed, one error is counted.

16.

ORIGINAL

Destination	Departure Time
Miami FL	6:00 A.M.
Seattle WA	7:30 A.M.
Chicago IL	8:00 A.M.

COPY

Destination	Departure Time
Miami FL	6:00 A.M.
Seatle WA	7:30 A.M.
Chicago IL	8:00 A.M.

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following error can be found:

- In the COPY, "Seatle" should be spelled "Seattle" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

One error can be found; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

17. **ORIGINAL**

Mr. Roland Thomas
4588 South Imperial Highway
Los Angeles CA 90031

COPY

Mr. Roeland Thomas
4568 South Imperial Highway
Los Angeles CA 90031

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following two errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "Roeland" should be spelled "Roland" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "4568" should be "4588" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Two</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

18. **ORIGINAL**

INVOICE NUMBER	*ORDER DATE*
125400-1212	12/02/2000
458465-2220	11/28/2000
353575-5501	01/22/2002
848488-7689	05/07/2002

COPY

INVOICE NUMBER	*ORDER DATE*
125400-1212	12/02/2000
458465-2220	11/28/2000
353575-5551	01/22/2002
848848-7689	05/07/2002

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the **COPY** to the **ORIGINAL**, the following two errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "353575-5551" should be "353575-5501" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "848848-7689" should be "848488-7689" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Two</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

19. **ORIGINAL**

Mr. Steve Michaels
512 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu CA 91195

COPY

Mr. Stevie Michaels
512 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu CA 91195

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following error can be found:

- In the COPY, "Stevie" should be spelled "Steve" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>One</u> error can be found; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

20.

ORIGINAL		**COPY**	
Thomas, S.	211 S. Pine St., Arcadia	Tomas, S.	11 S. Pine St., Arcadia
Torres, P.	18468 Oak Ave., Downey	Torres, P.	18668 Oak Ave., Downey
Barkley, K.	801 Gladys Way, Cerritos	Barkley, K.	801 Gladis Way, Cerritos

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following four errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "Tomas" should be spelled "Thomas" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "11" should be "211" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "18668 Oak Ave." should be "18468 Oak Ave." as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "Gladis Way" should be spelled "Gladys Way" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Four</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

21. **ORIGINAL**

Leung, R.	111 Aspen Way, Ontario
Ramos, P.	985 Corey St., Alhambra
White, T.	588 West 3rd St., Lynwood

COPY

Leung, R.	111 Aspen Way, Ontario
Ramos, P.	985 Corey St., Alhambra
White, T.	588 West 3rd St., Lynwood

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, no errors can be found.

Zero errors can be found; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

22. **ORIGINAL**

Item No.	Order No.
1 in nail	12588-12154
2¼ in nail	12588-12155
2 in screw	13225-85000
1½ in screw	13225-84878
1¾ in screw	13225-84879

COPY

Item No.	Order No.
1 in nail	12588-12154
2¼ in nail	12588-12155
2 in screw	13225-85900
1½ in screw	13225-84878
1¼ in screw	13225-84879

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following two errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "13225-85900" should be "13225-85000" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "1¼ in screw" should be "1¾ in screw" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

Two errors can be found; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

23. **ORIGINAL**

Ms. Mary Martinez
13258 West Sorensen Way,
Apt. 12B
Montebello CA 90640

COPY

Ms. Mary Martinez
13258 West Sorensen Way
Apt. 12D
Montebello CA 90640

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following two errors can be found:

- In the COPY, a comma should be placed after "Way" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "12D" should be "12B" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Two</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

24. **ORIGINAL**

Consumer Price Index, 1996-1998.
All Urban Consumers,
1996................................157.5
1997................................160.0
1998................................162.3

COPY

Consumer Price Index, 1996-1998.
All Urben Consumers
1996................................157.5
1997................................160.0
1998................................162.8

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following three errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "Urben" should be spelled "Urban" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, a comma should be inserted after "Consumers" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "162.8" should be "162.3" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Three</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

25. **ORIGINAL**

Average Annual Precipitation,
Selected Cities:

Albuquerque NM	8.5
Burlington VT	34.0
Las Vegas NV	4.1
New York NY	46.7
Portland OR	37.5

COPY

Average Annual Precipitation,
Selected Cities:

Albuquerque NN	8.5
Burlington VT	34.0
Las Vegas NV	4.1
New York NY	46.6
Portland OR	37.5

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following two errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "NN" should be "NM" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "46.6" should be "46.7" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Two</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

26. **ORIGINAL**

Average number of sunny days per year, selected cities:

Chicago IL..............................84
Columbus OH 72
Honolulu HI...........................90
Los Angeles CA.....................186
Miami FL 74

COPY

Average number of sunny days per year, seleccted cities:

Chicago IL 84
Columbus OH.........................72
Honolulu HI 90
Los Angeles CA 186
Miami FL...............................74

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following error can be found:

- In the COPY, "seleccted" should be spelled "selected" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>One</u> error can be found; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

27. **ORIGINAL**

U.S. Census Bureau
2002 Estimated Population
Southern California Coastal Cities:

Hermosa Beach	19,200
Long Beach	473,100
Malibu	13,050
Manhattan Beach	35,500

COPY

U.S Census Bureau
2002 Estimated Population
Southern California Costal Cities:

Hermosa Beach	19,200
Long Beach	473,100
Malibu	13,000
Manhatan Beach	35,500

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following four errors can be found:

- In the COPY, a period should be placed after the "S" in "U.S." as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "Costal" should be spelled "Coastal" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "13,000" should be "13,050" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "Manhatan" should be spelled "Manhattan" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>Four</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

28. **ORIGINAL**

Mr. Emeril Legassi
4258 Roxbury Drive, Suite 102
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

COPY

Mr. Emeril Legasi
4218 Roxbury Drive, Suite 102
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following two errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "Legasi" should be "Legassi" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "4218" should be "4258" as shown in the ORIGNAL.

<u>Two</u> errors can be found; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

29. **ORIGINAL**

Employee Name	*Phone No.*
Long, N.	(323) 568-2521
Nguyen, Q.	(562) 741-4584
Petrie, C.	(310) 323-6255
Sanchez, V.	(310) 362-9545

COPY

Employee Name	*Phone No.*
Long, N.	(323) 588-2521
Nguyen, Q.	(562) 741-4584
Petrie, C.	(310) 323-6255
Sanchez, V.	(310) 362-9545

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following error can be found:

- In the COPY, "(323) 588-2521" should be "(323) 568-2521" as shown in the ORIGINAL.

<u>One</u> error can be found; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

30. **ORIGINAL**

Applicant	Interview Date
Anderson, Alice	January 5, 2003
Chavez, Peter	January 6, 2003
Lee, David	January 6, 2003
Rogers, Martha	January 3, 2003

COPY

Applicant	Interview Date
Andersen, Alice	January 5, 2003
Chaves, Peter	January 8, 2003
Lee, David	January 6, 2003
Rogers, Martha	January 3, 2003

The number of errors in the **COPY** when compared to the **ORIGINAL** is

A. one.
B. two.
C. three.
D. none of these.

ANSWER: When comparing the COPY to the ORIGINAL, the following three errors can be found:

- In the COPY, "Andersen" should be spelled "Anderson" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "Chaves" should be spelled "Chavez" as shown in the ORIGINAL.
- In the COPY, "January 8, 2003" should be "January 6, 2003," as shown in the ORIGINAL.

Three errors can be found; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

BASIC ARITHMETIC ABILITY

INSTRUCTIONS: To answer questions 31-45, select the ONE BEST answer from the choices provided.

NOTE: Typically, there are multiple ways of obtaining the correct answer to each question, only one of which is provided as the answer explanation. Use the math glossary on page 33 to help you define any terms with which you may be unfamiliar.

31.

$$\begin{array}{r} .306 \\ 47.624 \\ 5.189 \\ +\quad .0004 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

A. 52.7594
B. 53.1194
C. 54.1194
D. 54.9753

ANSWER: The sum is 53.1194; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, set up the problem by aligning all decimal points. You may wish to add zero placeholders (shown in bold) to help ensure that the columns are aligned correctly (Step #1).

- Working right to left, add down each column, carrying values over to the next column as necessary. For example, in the second farthest column from the right, the sum is 19. Leave only the answer of 9 in that column and carry the 1 over to the next column to the left. Repeat for each column, making sure to carry down the decimal point in the appropriate column to maintain alignment, which results in 53.1194 (Step #2).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*
	1 1 1 1
00.306**0**	**00**.306**0**
47.624**0**	47.624**0**
05.189**0**	**0**5.189**0**
+**00**.0004	+**00**.0004
	53.1194

32. $\begin{array}{r} 398.62 \\ -\ 386.45 \\ \hline \end{array}$

A. 12.17
B. 12.27
C. 12.37
D. 12.47

ANSWER: The difference is <u>12.17</u>; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, set up the problem by aligning all decimal points. Working right to left, carry 1 over from the column to the left when the bottom number for a column is bigger than its top number (Step #1). For example, in the column farthest to the right, the 5 on the bottom is bigger than the 2 on the top, so you will need to carry 1 over from the column to the left, changing the 2 to 12 and the 6 to 5.

- Working right to left, solve by subtracting the bottom number in each column from the top one, making sure to carry down the decimal point in the appropriate column to maintain alignment, which results in 12.17 (Step #2).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*
$\begin{array}{r} {\scriptstyle 5\ 12} \\ 398.\cancel{6}\cancel{2} \\ -386.45 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} {\scriptstyle 5\ 12} \\ 398.\cancel{6}\cancel{2} \\ -386.45 \\ \hline 12.17 \end{array}$

33.

$$\begin{array}{r} 335 \\ \times\ 12 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

A. 3650
B. 3720
C. 4020
D. 4510

ANSWER: 335 x 12 is 4,020; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, working from **right to left**, multiply each digit in the number 335 by the 2 in the number 12, making sure to carry values over to the next column as necessary, for an answer of 670 (Step #1).

- Since the 1 is in the second column from the right of the whole number 12 (also called the "tens" column), add a zero placeholder (shown in bold) in the first column from the right (also called the "ones" column) of the answer, so that the answer is aligned with the 1. Multiply each digit in the number 335 by the 1 in the number 12, making sure to carry values over to the next column as necessary, for an answer of 335**0**.

- Add the answers of the two steps above, which results in 4,020 (Step #3).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*	*STEP #3*
$\begin{array}{r} {\scriptstyle 1} \\ 335 \\ \times\ 12 \\ \hline 670 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 335 \\ \times\ 12 \\ \hline 670 \\ 335\mathbf{0} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 335 \\ \times\ 12 \\ \hline 670 \\ +335\mathbf{0} \\ \hline 4020 \end{array}$

34. $4585 \div 5 =$

A. 916
B. 917
C. 918
D. 921

ANSWER: 4585 ÷ by 5 is <u>917</u>; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, working from left to right, divide each digit in the number 4585 by 5. Since 5 is bigger than the first digit in 4585, move over one column and divide the first 2 digits of the number 4585 by 5. 45 divided by 5 results in an answer of 9, which is placed above the last digit of the number that was divided, which is above the 5 in the number 45. Multiply 5 by 9, and place the answer (45) underneath the number that was divided (45), and subtract for an answer of 0 (Step #1).

- Carry down the next value to be divided in 4585, which is 8, and place it next to the 0 from Step #1. Divide 08, or 8, by 5, which results in an answer of 1, which is placed above the 8 in 4585. Multiply 5 by 1, and place the answer (5) underneath the number that was divided (8), and subtract for an answer of 3 (Step #2).

- Carry down the next value to be divided in 4585, which is 5, and place it next to the 3 from Step #3. Divide 35 by 5, which results in an answer of 7, which is placed above the last digit of the number that was divided, which is above the 5 in the number 35. Multiply 5 by 7, place the answer (35) underneath the number that was divided (35), and subtract for an answer of 0 (Step #3).

- No remaining value is left, so the answer is the whole number 917.

<u>STEP #1</u>	*<u>STEP #2</u>*	*<u>STEP #3</u>*
$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ 5\overline{)4585} \\ \underline{-45} \\ 0 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 91 \\ 5\overline{)4585} \\ \underline{-45} \\ 08 \\ \underline{-5} \\ 3 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 917 \\ 5\overline{)4585} \\ \underline{-45} \\ 08 \\ \underline{-5} \\ 35 \\ \underline{-35} \\ 0 \end{array}$

35. $\frac{7}{9} - \frac{5}{18}$

A. 2/13
B. 4/11
C. 4/10
D. 1/2

ANSWER: 7/9 – 5/18 is 1/2; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, find the least common multiple (LCM) for the denominator of each fraction. The LCM is the smallest non-zero number that is a multiple of both denominators. In this problem, the LCM is 18.

- Since 5/18 already has a denominator of 18, only 7/9 needs to be converted to have a denominator of 18. Since the LCM divided by the denominator is 2, multiply both the numerator and denominator in 7/9 by 2, so that the fraction becomes 14/18 (Step #1).

- Subtract 5/18 from 14/18 (by subtracting the numerators), for a difference of 9/18 (Step #2).

- Simplify 9/18 by dividing both the numerator and denominator each by the numerator value (9) to equal 1/2 (Step #3).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*	*STEP #3*
$\frac{7 \times 2}{9 \times 2} = \frac{14}{18}$	$\frac{14}{18} - \frac{5}{18} = \frac{9}{18}$	$\frac{9 \div 9}{18 \div 9} = \frac{1}{2}$

36.

$$\frac{3}{14} \times \frac{7}{9}$$

A. 1/6
B. 6/7
C. 10/23
D. 27/98

ANSWER: 3/14 multiplied by 7/9 is 1/6; therefore choice **A** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, multiply the numerators of each fraction (3 x 7 = 21) and the denominators of each fraction (14 x 9 = 126) to equal 21/126 (Step #1).

- Simplify 21/126 by dividing the numerator and denominator each by the numerator value (21), to equal 1/6.

STEP #1 *STEP #2*

$$\frac{3 \times 7}{14 \times 9} = \frac{21}{126} \quad \frac{21 \div 21}{126 \div 21} = \frac{1}{6}$$

37. ______ is 40% of 350.

A. 135
B. 140
C. 145
D. 150

ANSWER: 140 is 40% of 350; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- Convert 40% to a decimal by dividing 40 by 100. Set up the problem by adding a decimal point and a zero placeholder (shown in bold), to make 40 into 40.**0**. Next, determine the decimal place for the answer by counting the number of zero placeholders you added to 40 to make it divisible by 100. Since one zero was added to 40, count backwards from right to left one decimal place to convert the answer to .4 (Step #1).

- Multiply 350 by .4. Add a decimal point and a zero placeholder (shown in bold) to make 350 into 350.**0** to match the number of decimal places in the number it is being multiplied with (.4) and vertically align the decimal points in the two numbers. Count the number of decimal places to the right of the decimal point in 350.0 and .4 (which equals two) to determine that the answer should also have two decimal places. Count backwards from right to left two places and insert a decimal point, which results in 140.00, or 140 (Step #2).

STEP #1

$$\begin{array}{r} .4 \\ 100\overline{)\,40.\mathbf{0}} \\ -40.0 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{r} {\scriptstyle 2}\qquad\; \\ 350.\mathbf{0} \\ \times \qquad .4 \\ \hline 140.00 \end{array}$$

38. 6880 is ______% of 8000.

A. 82
B. 84
C. 86
D. 88

ANSWER: 6880 is 86% of 8000; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, divide 6880 by 8000. Set up the problem by adding a decimal point and zero placeholders (shown in bold), to make 6880 into 6880.**00**. Next, determine the decimal place for the answer by counting the number of zeros you added to 6880 to make it divisible by 8000. Since two zeros were added to 6880, count backwards from right to left two decimal places to convert the answer to .86 (Step #1).

- Multiply .86 by 100 to convert to a percent. Add a decimal point and zero placeholders (shown in bold) to make 100 into 100.**00** to match the number of decimal places in the number it is being multiplied with (.86) and vertically align the decimal points in the two numbers. Count the number of decimal places to the right of the decimal point in 100.00 and .86 (which equals four) to determine that the answer should also have four decimal places. Count backwards from right to left four places and insert a decimal point, which results in 86.0000, or 86%.

STEP #1	*STEP #2*
.86	
8000) 6880.**00**	100.**00**
-6400.00	x .86
480.00	60000
-480.00	+ 80000
0	86.0000

39. 270 is 75% of ______.

A. 360
B. 375
C. 380
D. 395

ANSWER: 270 is 75% of <u>360</u>; therefore, choice **A** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, convert 75% to a decimal by dividing 75 by 100. Set up the problem by adding a decimal point and zero placeholders (shown in bold), to make 75 into 75.**00**. Next, determine the decimal place for the answer by counting the number of zero placeholders you added to 75 to make it divisible by 100. Since two zeros were added to 75, count backwards from right to left two decimal places to convert the answer to .75 (Step #1).

- Divide 270 by .75. Set up the problem by converting the decimal to a whole number by moving the decimal point to the right two places. .75 becomes the whole number 75. Move the decimal place in 270 the same number of places to the right so that 270 becomes 27000. Divide 27000 by 75 which results in 360 (Step #2).

STEP #1	*STEP #2*
.75	360
100 ⟌ 75.**00**	75 ⟌ 27000
-70.0	-225
5.00	450
-5.00	-450
0	00

40.

	8 days	15 hours	20 minutes
+	6 days	8 hours	45 minutes

A. 14 days, 5 minutes
B. 14 days, 45 minutes
C. 15 days, 5 minutes
D. 16 days, 25 minutes

ANSWER: The sum is 15 days, 5 minutes; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, remember that there are 60 minutes in 1 hour and 24 hours in 1 day, and that you add from right to left, carrying over excess values to the next column to the left.
- Add the "minutes" measurements for a total of 65 minutes (Step #1).
- Convert the 65 minutes to 1 hour and 5 minutes and carry the 1 hour over to the "hours" measurements.
- Add the "hours" measurements for a total of 24 hours (Step #2).
- Convert 24 hours to 1 day and carry the 1 day over to the "days" measurements.
- Add the "days" measurements for a total of 15 days (Step #3). As a result, the total of all measurements is 15 days, 5 minutes.

STEP #1

	8 days	15 hrs	20 min
+	6 days	8 hrs	45 min
			65 min

STEP #2

		1 hr	
	8 days	15 hrs	20 min
+	6 days	8 hrs	45 min
		24 hrs	5 min

STEP #3

	1 day		
	8 days	15 hrs	20 min
+	6 days	8 hrs	45 min
	15 days		5 min

41. 3 feet 2 ¼ inches
7 feet 5 ¾ inches
\+ 13 feet 8 ½ inches

A. 24 feet, 4¼ inches
B. 24 feet, 4½ inches
C. 25 feet, 11¼ inches
D. 25 feet, 11½ inches

ANSWER: The sum is 24 feet, 4½ inches; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- To solve, remember that there are 12 inches in 1 foot and that you add from right to left, carrying over excess values to the next column to the left.
- Add the "inches" measurements for a total of 16½ inches (Step #1).
- Convert the 16½ inches to 1 foot, 4½ inches and carry the 1 foot over to the "feet" measurements.
- Add the "feet" measurements for a total of 24 feet (Step #2). As a result, the total of all measurements is 24 feet, 4½ inches.

STEP #1	*STEP #2*
	1 foot
3 feet 2 ¼ inches	3 feet 2 ¼ inches
7 feet 5 ¾ inches	7 feet 5 ¾ inches
+ 13 feet 8 ½ inches	+ 13 feet 8 ½ inches
16 ½ inches	24 feet 4 ½ inches

42. $8251 + 2419 =$

A. 10,340
B. 10,450
C. 10,560
D. 10,670

ANSWER: The sum is 10,670; therefore, choice **D** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- Set up the problem by lining numbers up vertically (Step #1).
- Working right to left, add each column, remembering to carry values over to the column to the left as necessary (Step #2).

STEP #1

$$\begin{array}{r} 8251 \\ +\ 2419 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

STEP #2

$$\begin{array}{r} {\scriptstyle 1} \\ 8251 \\ +\ 2419 \\ \hline 10670 \end{array}$$

43. 10.900 – 6.782 =

A. 3.127
B. 3.228
C. 4.118
D. 4.120

ANSWER: The difference is <u>4.118</u>; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- Set up the problem by lining up numbers vertically, aligning all decimal points (Step #1).

- Working right to left, set up the problem for solving by carrying values over only when the top value for a column is less than its bottom value (Step #2).

- Subtract all values to determine the difference (Step #3).

<u>STEP #1</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 10.900 \\ -\ 6.782 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #2</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} \scriptstyle 8\,9\,10 \\ 10.\cancel{9}\cancel{0}\cancel{0} \\ -\ 6.782 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #3</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} \scriptstyle 8\,9\,10 \\ 10.\cancel{9}\cancel{0}\cancel{0} \\ -\ 6.782 \\ \hline 4.118 \end{array}$$

44. $\begin{array}{r} 258.12 \\ \times \quad 3.45 \\ \hline \end{array}$

A. 870.415
B. 890.514
C. 980.451
D. 985.514

ANSWER: 258.12 multiplied by 3.45 is <u>890.514</u>; therefore, choice **B** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- Multiply 258.12 by each digit in the factor "3.45" separately. You may wish to add zero placeholders (shown in bold) to help ensure that columns are aligned correctly (Step #1).
- Add the products from Step #1 and insert the decimal point in the answer four places from the right, as the factors 258.12 and 3.45 have a total of four decimal places (Step #2).

<u>STEP #1</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 258.12 \\ \times \quad 3.45 \\ \hline 129060 \\ 103248\mathbf{0} \\ 77436\mathbf{00} \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #2</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 258.12 \\ \times \quad 3.45 \\ \hline 129060 \\ 103248\mathbf{0} \\ +77436\mathbf{00} \\ \hline 8905140 \\ \\ 890.514 \end{array}$$

45. $3510 \div 13 =$

A. 250
B. 260
C. 270
D. 280

ANSWER: 3510 divided by 13 is <u>270</u>; therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.

EXPLANATION:

- Set up the problem by placing the number to be divided (3510) inside the bar, and the divisor (13) to the left of the vertical bar (Step #1).

- Determine how many times 35 can be divided by 13 and place the number (2) over the 35. Multiply the number (2) by the divisor (13) and subtract the result (26) from the number divided (35) to equal the remainder 9 (Step #2).

- Carry down the next digit in 3510 (1) by placing it next to the remainder from Step #2, to equal 91 (Step #3).

- Repeat Step #2 and Step #3 until all the possibilities of division have been exhausted and there are no other numbers to be divided (Step #4).

<u>STEP #1</u>

$$13\overline{)3510}$$

<u>STEP #2</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 13\overline{)3510} \\ \underline{-26} \\ 9 \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #3</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 13\overline{)3510} \\ \underline{-26} \\ 91 \end{array}$$

<u>STEP #4</u>

$$\begin{array}{r} 270 \\ 13\overline{)3510} \\ \underline{-26} \\ 91 \\ \underline{-91} \\ 0 \end{array}$$

GLOSSARY OF MATHEMATICAL TERMS

Area: The number of square units that covers a shape or figure.

Denominator: The bottom part of a fraction. (Example: in the fraction ¾, 4 is the denominator.)

Digit: The ten numerals 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The number 14 has two digits: 1 and 4.

Difference: The result of subtracting one number from another.

Divisor: In a division problem, the number that is divided into another (For example when dividing 4 into 20, the 4 would be the divisor, as it is used to divide the number 20 into five parts).

Factor: One of two or more numerical values that are multiplied together to yield a product.

Fraction: A number expressed in terms of a numerator and denominator.

Least Common Multiple: The smallest, non-zero multiple of the denominators of two or more fractions.

Numerator: The top part of a fraction. (Example, in the fraction ¾ 3 is the numerator).

Operation: Any one of the basic arithmetic functions of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division.

Product: The result of two numbers being multiplied together.

Quotient: The result of dividing one number into another.

Sum: The result of adding together two or more numbers.

Appendix Q

County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
Workforce Planning, Test Research, and Appeals Division
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Los Angeles, CA 90010
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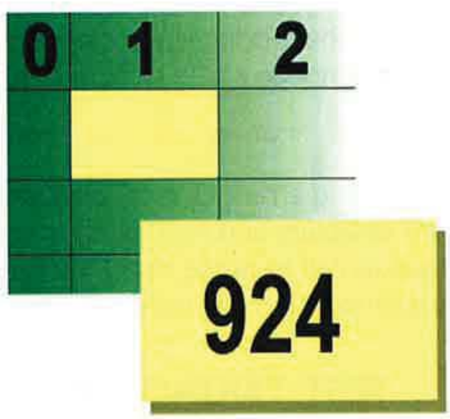
http://dhr.lacounty.info

Data Interpretation - Level 1
Study Guide & Sample Test Questions
Version 1



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in employment with the County of Los Angeles. This booklet is designed to familiarize and assist you with preparing for tests containing multiple-choice data interpretation items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of data interpretation items you may encounter in County tests. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested.

ABOUT THE COUNTY'S EXAMINATIONS

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the County of Los Angeles takes steps to ensure that our exam content is job-related. We conduct studies to determine the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assist us in developing the content of our examinations. Pre-employment testing provides us with an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of our applicants.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE WRITTEN TEST?

To prepare for the written test, you should study the concepts assessed in each section. It is likely that there will be several sections to the test in addition to data interpretation; thus, it is to your benefit to carefully read the job bulletin to determine the knowledge, skill, and ability areas the written test will cover. In addition, it is important that you read the entire written test notice for the location and time of the test as well as for parking instructions and other important information. Pay special attention to whether testing aids/materials such as hand-held calculators are allowed in the written test. If the test notice indicates that testing aids/materials are allowed, then you are strongly advised to bring these with you, as they will not be provided. On test day, it is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes prior to the test's starting time, wear comfortable clothes, bring an accurate watch, and make sure you are well-rested. Also, remember to bring your test notice and a picture I.D. such as a driver license, or you may not be admitted into the test!

NOTE: Applicants who require special testing arrangements such as readers or interpreters must provide seven (7) days advance notice of their disability and requested accommodation. Check the front side of the job bulletin for telephone numbers to call to make disability accommodation requests. The County will attempt to meet reasonable accommodation requests whenever possible.

TEST-TAKING TIPS

Most County tests have a set time limit, so it is important that you work quickly, but not so fast as to become careless. Always read all the possible choices before marking your answer. If you don't know the answer to a problem, it is usually best to skip it and move on to the others. Note that on most County tests, your score is based on the number of correct responses. If you are not sure of the answer to a problem, eliminate the answers you believe are wrong, and mark the choice that is your best response. Above all, budget your time, pace yourself, and avoid getting bogged down on any single question.

SAMPLE DATA INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

Data interpretation Level I items test your ability to understand and interpret data provided in tabular formats; however, questions will vary from one test to another. The following are examples of the types of data interpretation Level I questions most common to County examinations. Answers and explanations for the questions are provided on page 7 of this study guide. NOTE: actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

Identifying the Correct Code

INSTRUCTIONS: To answer questions 1-5, determine the correct code using the table provided. Orders are coded as follows: **ORDER – COST – SHIPPING METHOD**.

ORDER	CODE	COST	CODE	SHIPPING METHOD	CODE
Developer	243	Less than $100	M	Customer Pick-Up	1
Drum Cartridge	323	$100-$250	N	Standard Mail	2
Staple Cartridge	523	$251-$350	O	UPS	3
Print Cartridge	545	$351-$450	P	Federal Express	4
Paper Tray	687	$451-$550	Q	DHL	5
Fuse Lubricant	949	$551-$650	R	Airborne Express	6
Toner Cartridge	958	Greater than $651	S	Emery Worldwide	7

1. What would the code be for an order of toner cartridges that cost $351.50 and shipped via Airborne Express?

   A. 545-Q-4
   B. 958-P-6
   C. 958-P-3
   D. 949-O-6

2. Which of the following is the **CORRECT** interpretation for code 523-Q-4?

   A. An order for drum cartridges costing $499.00 was picked up by the customer.
   B. An order for staple cartridges costing $334.87 was shipped via DHL.
   C. An order for developer costing $650.00 was shipped via Federal Express.
   D. An order for staple cartridges costing $525.12 was shipped via Federal Express.

ORDER	CODE	COST	CODE	SHIPPING METHOD	CODE
Developer	243	Less than $100	M	Customer Pick-Up	1
Drum Cartridge	323	$100-$250	N	Standard Mail	2
Staple Cartridge	523	$251-$350	O	UPS	3
Print Cartridge	545	$351-$450	P	Federal Express	4
Paper Tray	687	$451-$550	Q	DHL	5
Fuse Lubricant	949	$551-$650	R	Airborne Express	6
Toner Cartridge	958	Greater than $651	S	Emery Worldwide	7

3. An order came in for developer costing $266.23. The customer wants to pick up the order. What would the code be for this order?

   A. 243-O-1
   B. 243-Q-3
   C. 545-R-5
   D. 949-S-1

4. Which of the following is the **CORRECT** interpretation for code 949-R-5?

   A. Fuse lubricant - $737.71 - DHL
   B. Toner cartridges - $585.19 - UPS
   C. Fuse lubricant - $637.71 - DHL
   D. Developer - $651.07 - DHL

5. An employee made a mistake when using a code of 523-M-2 for an order of drum cartridges that cost $234.00 and was shipped via standard mail. Which of the following is the correct code?

   A. 323-R-5
   B. 687-M-1
   C. 523-P-4
   D. 323-N-2

INSTRUCTIONS: To answer questions 6-10, determine the correct coding scheme from the information given in the table below. Employees provide a variety of program services to departments. The departments are then charged by the hour based on the number of hours worked. The order of the billing code is always as follows: **EMPLOYEE – HOURS WORKED – PROGRAM – DEPT – HOURLY RATE**.

EMPLOYEE	CODE	HOURS WORKED	CODE	PROGRAM	CODE	DEPT.	CODE	HOURLY RATE	CODE
Smith	22158	2	M	Program 1	207	F	3C	$0 - 7^{99}$	QQ
Thomas	22601	3	N	Program 2	702	G	5K	$8^{00} - 15^{99}$	RR
Garcia	61745	4	P	Program 3	524	H	8J	$16^{00} - 23^{99}$	SS
Williams	61748	5	Q	Program 4	452	J	4F	$24^{00} - 31^{99}$	TT
Peters	83917	6	R	Program 5	567	K	7P	$32^{00} - 39^{99}$	UU
Cheung	10589	7	S	Program 6	822	L	2L	$40^{00} - 47^{99}$	XX
Johnson	19588	8	T	Program 7	937	N	9J	$48^{00} - 55^{99}$	ZZ

6. If Smith worked four hours for Program 3 and charged Department F an hourly rate of $33.42, what would be the code?

   A. 22158-P-452-5K-TT
   B. 22601-P-567-3C-UU
   C. 22158-P-524-3C-UU
   D. 83917-P-702-2L-UU

7. Interpret the following code: 61745-R-937-7P-RR.

   A. Garcia worked 6 hours for Program 7 at Department K and charged $14.00 an hour.
   B. Williams worked 4 hours for Program 5 at Department J and charged an hourly rate of $17.14.
   C. Williams worked 7 hours for Program 7 at Department K at a rate of $14.00 per hour.
   D. Garcia worked 6 hours for Program 7 at Department K and charged an hourly rate of $24.05.

8. Employee code 22601 worked 3 hours for Program 4 and charged Department N an hourly rate of $21.27. Name the employee and the correct hourly rate code.

   A. Smith, TT
   B. Johnson, SS
   C. Thomas, SS
   D. Thomas, ZZ

EMPLOYEE	CODE	HOURS WORKED	CODE	PROGRAM	CODE	DEPT	CODE	HOURLY RATE	CODE
Smith	22158	2	M	Program 1	207	F	3C	$0 - 7^{99}$	QQ
Thomas	22601	3	N	Program 2	702	G	5K	$8^{00} - 15^{99}$	RR
Garcia	61745	4	P	Program 3	524	H	8J	$16^{00} - 23^{99}$	SS
Williams	61748	5	Q	Program 4	452	J	4F	$24^{00} - 31^{99}$	TT
Peters	83917	6	R	Program 5	567	K	7P	$32^{00} - 39^{99}$	UU
Cheung	10589	7	S	Program 6	822	L	2L	$40^{00} - 47^{99}$	XX
Johnson	19588	8	T	Program 7	937	N	9J	$48^{00} - 55^{99}$	ZZ

9. Department J was charged $48.50 an hour because Cheung worked 8 hours for Program 1. The code was entered as 10589-T-207-4F-ZZ. If Cheung works 3 hours for the same program tomorrow and charges Department F $9.00 per hour, what would be the new code?

A. 10589-M-207-2L-TT
B. 10589-N-207-4F-TT
C. 10589-M-207-3C-RR
D. 10589-N-207-3C-RR

10. Department G requested services from Peters for Program 6. What would the code be if Peters worked 7 hours at an hourly rate of $51.00?

A. 83917-S-822-5K-ZZ
B. 19588-N-702-5K-ZZ
C. 10589-M-207-8J-XX
D. 83917-P-822-5K-ZZ

Answers and Explanations to Data Interpretation Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is B. The code is 958-P-6, signifying that an order of toner cartridges (958) that cost $351.50 (P) was shipped via Airborne Express (6).

2. The correct answer is D. The code is 523-Q-4, signifying that an order for staple cartridges (523) that cost $525.12 (Q) was shipped via Federal Express (4).

3. The correct answer is A. The code for this order is 243 (Developer) –O ($266.23) –1 (Customer Pick-Up).

4. The correct answer is C. The code is 949-R-5, signifying that an order for Fuse Lubricant (949) costing $637.71 (R) was shipped via DHL (5).

5. The correct answer is D. The code for this order is 323 (Drum Cartridges) –N ($234.00) –2 (Standard Mail).

6. The correct answer is C. The code for this entry is 22158 (Smith) –P (4 hours) –524 (Program 3) –3C (Department F) –UU ($33.42).

7. The correct answer is A. The code should be interpreted as Employee Garcia (61745) working for six hours (R) for Program 7 (937) in Department K (7P) at a rate of $14.00 per hour (RR).

8. The correct answer is C. The employee is Thomas (22601) and the correct hourly rate code is SS ($21.27).

9. The correct answer is D. The new code is 10589 (Cheung) –N (3 hours) –207 (Program 1) –3C (Department F) –RR ($9.00).

10. The correct answer is A. The code for this entry is 83917 (Peters) –S (7 hours) –822 (Program 6) –5K (Department G) –ZZ ($51.00).

County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
Workforce Planning, Test Research, and Appeals Division
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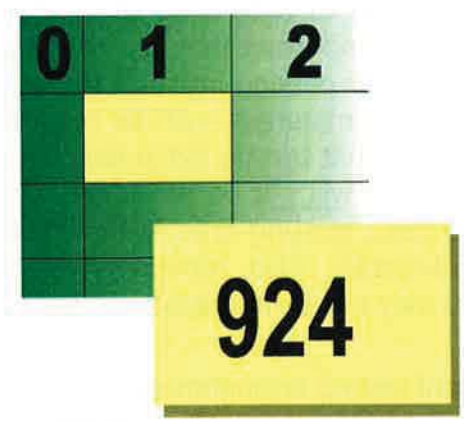
Data Interpretation - Level 1
Study Guide & Sample Test Questions
Version 2



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in employment with the County of Los Angeles. This booklet is designed to familiarize and assist you with preparing for tests containing multiple-choice data interpretation items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of data interpretation items you may encounter in County tests. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested.

ABOUT THE COUNTY'S EXAMINATIONS

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the County of Los Angeles takes steps to ensure that our exam content is job-related. We conduct studies to determine the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assist us in developing the content of our examinations. Pre-employment testing provides us with an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of our applicants.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE WRITTEN TEST?

To prepare for the written test, you should study the concepts assessed in each section. It is likely that there will be several sections to the test in addition to data interpretation; thus, it is to your benefit to carefully read the job bulletin to determine the knowledge, skill, and ability areas the written test will cover. In addition, it is important that you read the entire written test notice for the location and time of the test as well as for parking instructions and other important information. Pay special attention to whether testing aids/materials such as hand-held calculators are allowed in the written test. If the test notice indicates that testing aids/materials are allowed, then you are strongly advised to bring these with you, as they will not be provided. On test day, it is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes prior to the test's starting time, wear comfortable clothes, bring an accurate watch, and make sure you are well-rested. Also, remember to bring your test notice and a picture I.D. such as a driver license, or you may not be admitted into the test!

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TEST-TAKING TIPS

Most County tests have a set time limit, so it is important that you work quickly, but not so fast as to become careless. Always read all the possible choices before marking your answer. If you don't know the answer to a problem, it is usually best to skip it and move on to the others. Note that on most County tests, your score is based on the number of correct responses. If you are not sure of the answer to a problem, eliminate the answers you believe are wrong, and mark the choice that is your best response. Above all, budget your time, pace yourself, and avoid getting bogged down on any single question.

SAMPLE DATA INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

Data interpretation Level I items test your ability to understand and interpret data provided in tabular formats; however, questions will vary from one test to another. The following are examples of the types of data interpretation Level I questions most common to County examinations. Answers and explanations for the questions are provided on page 7 of this study guide. NOTE: actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

Identifying the Correct Code

INSTRUCTIONS: To answer questions 1-5, determine the correct code using the table provided. Orders are coded as follows: **ORDER – COST – SHIPPING METHOD**.

ORDER	CODE	COST	CODE	SHIPPING METHOD	CODE
Syringe	234	Less than $100	E	UPS	1
Bandage	394	$100-$250	F	Emery Worldwide	2
Aspirin	482	$251-$350	G	DHL	3
Thermometer	593	$351-$450	H	Federal Express	4
Sheet	649	$451-$550	I	Airborne Express	5
Oxygen Tank	732	$551-$650	J	Standard Mail	6
Scalpel	811	Greater than $651	K	Customer Walk-In	7

1. What would be the code for an order of syringes that cost $151.22 and was shipped via Federal Express?

   A. 234-F-4
   B. 234-H-5
   C. 394-N-6
   D. 394-O-4

2. The code 811-H-5 is **CORRECT** for an order of

   A. sheets costing $366.00 and shipped via DHL.
   B. scalpels costing $452.00 and shipped via DHL.
   C. sheets costing $499.00 and shipped via Federal Express.
   D. scalpels costing $435.00 and shipped via Airborne Express.

ORDER	CODE	COST	CODE	SHIPPING METHOD	CODE
Syringe	234	Less than $100	E	UPS	1
Bandage	394	$100-$250	F	Emery Worldwide	2
Aspirin	482	$251-$350	G	DHL	3
Thermometer	593	$351-$450	H	Federal Express	4
Sheet	649	$451-$550	I	Airborne Express	5
Oxygen Tank	732	$551-$650	J	Standard Mail	6
Scalpel	811	Greater than $651	K	Customer Walk-In	7

3. An order came in for aspirin costing $78.99. The customer wants to pick up the order. What would the code be for this order?

   A. 482-E-6
   B. 482-E-7
   C. 593-E-7
   D. 593-F-6

4. The code 649-J-1 is **CORRECT** for an order of

   A. sheets costing $598.77 and shipped via UPS.
   B. sheets costing $549.33 and shipped via UPS.
   C. syringes costing $675.99 and shipped via DHL.
   D. syringes costing $432.88 and shipped via DHL.

5. An employee made an error when applying a code of 732-H-6 for an order of bandages that cost $432.00 and was shipped via Emery Worldwide. Of the following, the **CORRECT** code is

   A. 394-H-2.
   B. 394-H-7.
   C. 482-J-6.
   D. 732-J-2.

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer questions 6-10 using the table provided, which displays timecard codes for employee, hours worked, program, department, and hourly rate, used for charging program services provided by employees to departments. Codes are recorded as: **EMPLOYEE—HOURS WORKED—PROGRAM—DEPT—HOURLY RATE**.

EMPLOYEE	CODE	HOURS WORKED	CODE	PROGRAM	CODE	DEPT.	CODE	HOURLY RATE	CODE
Kim	33882	9	A	Program 1	304	H	2D	$0-$6.99	JJ
Rodriguez	55448	8	B	Program 2	465	I	4F	$7.00-$15.99	KK
Smith	66228	7	C	Program 3	598	J	5G	$16.00-$22.99	LL
Jones	67994	6	D	Program 4	678	K	6S	$23.00-$30.99	MM
Jackson	33294	5	E	Program 5	723	L	7C	$31.00-$38.99	NN
Williams	88556	4	F	Program 6	811	M	8B	$39.00-$46.99	OO
Gonzalez	22449	3	G	Program 7	953	N	9D	$47.00-$54.99	PP

6. If Jones worked six hours for Program 5 and charged Department L an hourly rate of $24.99, the code would be

   A. 22449-B-304-2D-KK.
   B. 22449-C-598-5G-NN.
   C. 67994-D-678-7C-PP.
   D. 67994-D-723-7C-MM.

7. Interpret the code 88556-E-953-8B-LL.

   A. Williams worked 5 hours for Program 7 and charged Department M $18.75 an hour.
   B. Jackson worked 5 hours for Program 7 and charged Department M $18.00 per hour.
   C. Williams worked 4 hours for Program 5 and charged Department N $38.90 per hour.
   D. Jackson worked 4 hours for Program 6 at Department N and charged $48.00 an hour.

EMPLOYEE	CODE	HOURS WORKED	CODE	PROGRAM	CODE	DEPT.	CODE	HOURLY RATE	CODE
Kim	33882	9	A	Program 1	304	H	2D	$0-$6.99	JJ
Rodriguez	55448	8	B	Program 2	465	I	4F	$7.00-$15.99	KK
Smith	66228	7	C	Program 3	598	J	5G	$16.00-$22.99	LL
Jones	67994	6	D	Program 4	678	K	6S	$23.00-$30.99	MM
Jackson	33294	5	E	Program 5	723	L	7C	$31.00-$38.99	NN
Williams	88556	4	F	Program 6	811	M	8B	$39.00-$46.99	OO
Gonzalez	22449	3	G	Program 7	953	N	9D	$47.00-$54.99	PP

8. Employee number 33882 worked 6 hours for Program 2 and charged Department H an hourly rate of $52.99. The **CORRECT** employee and hourly rate code is

   A. Kim; PP.
   B. Jackson; PP.
   C. Jackson; OO.
   D. Gonzalez; PP.

9. Department I was charged $32.99 an hour because Jackson worked 8 hours for Program 5. The timecard entry code was 33294-B-723-4F-NN. If Jackson works 3 hours for the same program tomorrow and charges Department M $40.00 per hour, what would be the code?

   A. 33294-E-723-7C-OO
   B. 33294-G-723-8B-JJ
   C. 33294-F-723-4F-OO
   D. 33294-G-723-8B-OO

10. Department J requested services from Gonzalez for Program 3. If Gonzalez worked 8 hours at $53.00 per hour, the code would be

   A. 22449-B-678-2D-NN.
   B. 22449-B-598-5G-PP.
   C. 22449-E-678-7C-OO.
   D. 33882-C-811-6S-OO.

Answers and Explanations to Data Interpretation Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is **A**. The code is 234-F-4, indicating an order of syringes (234) costing $151.22 (F) and shipped via Federal Express (4).

2. The correct answer is **D**. The code is correct for an order of scalpels (811) costing $435.00 (H) and shipped via Airborne Express (5).

3. The correct answer is **B**. The code for this order would be 482 (Aspirin) –E ($78.99) –7 (Customer Walk-In).

4. The correct answer is **A**. The code 649-J-1 is correct for an order of sheets (649) costing $598.77 (J) and shipped via UPS (1).

5. The correct answer is **A**. The code for this order is 394 (Bandages) –H ($432.00) –2 (shipped via Emery Worldwide).

6. The correct answer is **D**. The code for this entry is 67994 (Jones) –D (6 hours) –723 (Program 5) –7C (Department L) –MM ($24.99).

7. The correct answer is **A**. The code would be interpreted as Williams (88556) worked 5 hours (E) for Program 7 (953) and charged Department M (8B) $18.75 per hour (LL).

8. The correct answer is **A**. The employee is Kim (33882) and the correct hourly rate code is PP ($52.99).

9. The correct answer is **D**. The new code would be 33294 (Jackson) –G (3 hours) –723 (Program 5) –8B (Department M) –OO ($40.00 an hour).

10. The correct answer is **B**. The code for this entry would be 22449 (Gonzalez) –B (8 hours) –598 (Program 3) –5G (Department J) –PP ($53.00 an hour).

Appendix R

County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
Workforce Planning, Test Research, and Appeals Division
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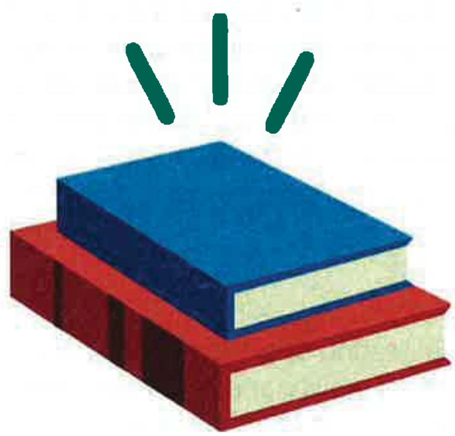
Reading Comprehension Study Guide & Sample Test Questions Version 1



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in employment with the County of Los Angeles. This booklet is designed to familiarize and assist you with preparing for tests containing multiple-choice reading comprehension items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the kinds of reading comprehension items you may encounter in County tests. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested.

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SAMPLE READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Reading comprehension questions test your ability to read and interpret written material; however, actual questions will vary from one test to another. For instance, the test may require that you read an example of a letter similar to one you may encounter in the position for which you are testing and answer a series of questions based on the letter. The following are examples of the types of passage interpretation reading comprehension questions most common to County employment tests. Answers and explanations for the questions are provided on pages 11-12 of this study guide. NOTE: Actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

INSTRUCTIONS: For each question, read the information provided and answer the question that follows.

1. The Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (ACC) is one of the largest and most progressive animal control agencies in the United States. The ACC operates six animal shelters serving all unincorporated County areas and 50 contract cities. The ACC covers more than 3,200 square miles of cities, deserts, beaches, and mountains; from the Antelope Valley in the north to the Palos Verdes Peninsula in the south; as far east as the border of San Bernardino County and west all the way to Thousand Oaks. The ACC provides animal control and rescue services 24 hours a day, seven days a week in our service area.

   According to the passage,

   A. the ACC handles only domestic animals.
   B. the ACC provides control and rescue services for some cities.
   C. Animal Care and Control operates within and outside of Los Angeles County.
   D. services are provided to any city or unincorporated area within the 3,200 miles covered by the Agency.

2. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has appointed a newly-established Workforce Investment Board (WIB), which will implement the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. WIB's mandate is to provide key policy decisions affecting the local workforce development system, and to identify and certify the areas within Los Angeles County where WorkSource California Centers are located to be designated as Workforce Investment Areas.

   According to the passage,

   A. WIB is chiefly responsible for providing decisions related to policy.
   B. County Board of Supervisors passed the Workforce Investment Act.
   C. WorkSource California Centers are unique to areas within Los Angeles County.
   D. the Workforce Investment Act will put into practice the Workforce Investment Board.

3. The Scientific Services Bureau operates one of the largest full-service crime laboratories in the United States. A staff of 198 members provides forensic science support to all Los Angeles County law enforcement agencies, except the Los Angeles Police Department. Approximately one half of the nearly 70,000 cases submitted annually to the Crime Lab is from Sheriff's Department investigators, while the remainder is from local, state, and federal agencies. Since 1989 the Scientific Services Bureau has been an accredited laboratory through the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB).

According to the passage,

A. the Bureau initiated its operation in 1989.
B. the crime lab is the largest lab of its kind in the country.
C. the crime lab is capable of performing all required forensic lab analysis.
D. the number of cases the crime lab received increased after it received its accreditation.

4. The Agricultural Commissioner/Weights & Measures Department routinely conducts price verification inspections at retail locations to confirm that prices charged to consumers are the same as those posted or advertised. On a typical visit to a store, the inspector will select up to 15 items and then take them to the check stand for payment. When the items' bar codes are scanned at the register, the price showing at the register must match what is posted on the shelf or advertised. If the prices do not match, the store will receive a notice of violation and the case may be turned over to the District Attorney's Office or local city attorney for prosecution.

According to the passage,

A. an inspector will usually find a pricing error when 15 items are being purchased.
B. an item costing less than the announced price will not be considered a violation.
C. a store receives a violation when the shelf or advertised price does not match the charged price.
D. price violation cases are automatically turned over to the appropriate jurisdiction's attorney office.

5. Reserve Deputy Probation Officers are deputized volunteers who have received special training in order to assist Probation staff in a wide range of supervised responsibilities, that include direct involvement with juvenile and adult probationers. Reserve Deputies are highly motivated, skilled, and caring people who want to serve their community as a part of the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Reserve Deputies are not a replacement for or an alternative to paid staff, but are intended to be an enhancement to existing resources.

From the passage, it can be inferred that

A. experienced Reserve Deputies supervise new volunteer Reserve Deputies.
B. direct interaction with probationers is the primary Duty of a Reserve deputy.
C. members of the community who become Reserve Deputies have a desire to give back to the community.
D. Reserve Deputies are able to act independently on the job once they have successfully passed all training requirements.

6. The Criminal Grand Jury of Los Angeles County attends hearings brought by the District Attorney's Office. The objective of this jury is to determine, on the basis of evidence presented by the District Attorney's Office, whether certain persons should be charged with crimes and required to stand trial in Superior Court. The Criminal Grand Jury is an accusatory body and not a trial jury; therefore, the burden of proof is much lower. Specifically, the Criminal Grand Jury must decide if there is a strong suspicion the individual committed the alleged crime.

According to the passage,

A. the burden of proof is held to a stricter standard during the review of evidence.
B. the District Attorney presents its case to the Criminal Grand Jury in Superior Court.
C. when a strong suspicion is determined, the Grand Jury recommends the charged individuals punishment.
D. the Criminal Grand Jury is responsible for deciding if the alleged perpetrator of a crime should stand trial.

7. The programs and resources developed by the Education Department of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art are designed to extend the museum experience in the fullest possible way to the widest possible audience, both present and future. These programs provide visitors of all ages with the opportunity to expand their experience with works of art in both the museum's permanent collection and its special exhibitions.

According to the passage,

A. retired teachers serve as program designers and instructors at the museum.
B. educational opportunities are restricted to the museum's permanent collection.
C. the Education Department of the County Museum of Art targets its educational materials to children.
D. the learning experience provided by the museum can be enhanced through programs developed by the Education Department.

8. Since 1944, the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation has been meeting the diverse needs of not only residents, but also visitors from around the world. With over 63,000 acres of parks, gardens, lakes, trails, natural areas, and the world's largest public golf course system, the Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to providing the public with social, cultural, and recreational activities to enjoy the whole year round!

According to the passage,

A. the County has boasted the largest public golf course system since 1944.
B. the natural areas of Los Angeles County are one of the biggest attractions for visitors.
C. the department offers a variety of activities that represent the needs of the community.
D. the Department of Parks and Recreation focuses its efforts entirely on recreational activities.

9. The main function of the Civil Grand Jury is to investigate county, city, and joint-power agencies. This is a significant civil function. The Grand Jury acts in a "watch-dog" capacity by examining carefully and completely the operations of various government agencies within Los Angeles County. The Civil Grand Jury cannot investigate state or federal agencies, which lie outside their jurisdiction. Part of the investigation of governmental agencies includes the ability to audit operations, accounts, and records of officers and departments within the agency under investigation. The Civil Grand Jury is further charged with investigating individual complaints from citizens. By statute the Grand Jury is required to inquire regarding the conditions and management of all public prisons within the County of Los Angeles.

According to the passage,

A. complaints filed by prisoners are not investigated by the Grand Jury.
B. auditing is the only method the Grand Jury uses during an investigation of a department.
C. the Civil Grand Jury is able to investigate any public sector agency within the County of Los Angeles.
D. the Grand Jury monitors and investigates the operations of local government agencies in Los Angeles County.

10. Los Angeles County Immunization Program efforts are targeted primarily toward pediatric and adolescent immunizations, with some adult immunization activities. Although this Program serves the entire County population, many activities are specifically directed toward communities with children at high risk of under-immunization. The Immunization Program partners with other organizations to provide outreach and immunization services in pockets of need areas, which are defined as those areas with large numbers of unimmunized and underimmunized children.

According to the passage,

A. children considered high risk are a special concern for the County Immunization Program.
B. specialized outreach services to populations in rural parts of the County are a valued service.
C. the need to be immunized is less important for unimmunized adults than it is for unimmunized children.
D. the County Immunization Program operates as an independent agency providing immunization services.

11. The Los Angeles County Tobacco Control Program (TCP) is part of the Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in the Department of Health Services. It was established as a result of the tobacco tax initiative of 1988, Proposition 99/AB75, in December of 1989. The goal of TCP is to establish policies, health services, public education, and media conditions that support the reduction of tobacco use in Los Angeles County and the associated disease, disability, and mortality.

From the passage, it can be inferred that

A. the regulation of the production of tobacco products is covered by the TCP.
B. Proposition 99/AB75 added more regulations to the tobacco tax initiative.
C. the tobacco tax initiative was a measure to reduce taxes on tobacco products.
D. television advertisements discussing health concerns related to smoking could be an example of a TCP initiative.

12. Water Awareness, Training, Education, and Recreation (W.A.T.E.R.) offers a wide variety of year-around, ocean-related recreational activities for young people, ages 7-17 on Los Angeles County beaches from Zuma to Cabrillo. Nationally recognized for unique and creative children's programs, W.A.T.E.R. strives to be on the cutting edge of serving the public with a comprehensive, quality aquatic program. Experienced County Ocean Lifeguards instruct the youth activities, supervising the students and sharing their knowledge of the marine environment.

According to the passage,

A. older children help to train the younger children in aquatic program activities.
B. Ocean Lifeguards train W.A.T.E.R. participants along any southern California beach.
C. Lifeguards provide instruction to participating youth during the summer months only.
D. W.A.T.E.R. is a broad-based program designed to provide the public with meaningful services.

13. From time to time the County of Los Angeles makes surplus property available for sale to the public. This property consists of County property; unclaimed or abandoned personal property and valuables, except those confiscated in conjunction with drug enforcement activities; and unclaimed stolen property. The surplus property is disposed of through sale bids, auctions, and donations.

According to the passage,

A. the County's personal property brings in the largest sales.
B. items that are not claimed by their owner will be sold to the public.
C. the County holds regularly scheduled sales of property to the public.
D. property obtained by drug enforcement activities is sold through the bid process.

Critical Reading

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the passage below and answer questions 14-15. NOTE: Actual test questions will vary in format, content, and level of difficulty.

The term "Civil Service" is generally applied to paid nonmilitary service in a nonelective office in the executive branch of government. In 1883, in response to public outcry over the Spoils System, Congress passed the Civil Service Act, which created the foundations of the American Civil Service system. Among the components of the act are provisions for the selection of Civil Service personnel by open competitive examinations; guarantees for Civil Service employees from forms of coercion for political reasons; and the creation of a Civil Service Commission, an appointive board charged with administering the act. At the time of passage, the Civil Service Act covered ten percent of all classes of positions in the competitive service. By the early 1980s however, that number had grown to almost 85 percent of all federal civilian jobs in the United States. In 1978 Congress passed the Civil Service Reform Act, which replaced the Civil Service Commission with the Office of Personnel Management.

14. The primary purpose of the passage is to

A. explain the origins of the U.S. Civil Service system.
B. describe the functions of the Civil Service Commission.
C. contrast the Spoils System with selection-by-examination.
D. illustrate the breadth and scope of public-sector employment.

15. From the passage, it can be inferred that the

A. Spoils System of employee selection was highly corrupted.
B. Office of Personnel Management will eventually be abolished.
C. Civil Service Commission failed to properly administer the Civil Service Act.
D. number of jobs covered under the Civil Service Act will continue to increase.

Answers and Explanations to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The correct answer is **B**. The passage states that the ACC serves 50 contract cities.

2. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that the WIB is mandated to "provide key policy decisions."

3. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that the Bureau operates a "full-service" crime lab.

4. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that a store will receive a violation if the price showing at the register does not "match what is posted on the shelf or advertised."

5. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that Reserve deputies are "people who want to serve their community."

6. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that the Criminal Grand Jury weighs evidence to determine whether certain persons should be required to stand trial in the Superior Court.

7. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that the Education Department's programs and resources are "designed to extend the museum experience."

8. The correct answer is **C**. The passage states that Department meets the diverse needs of both residents and visitors.

9. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that the Grand Jury examines the operations of various government agencies within Los Angeles County.

10. The correct answer is **A**. The passage states that many Program activities are "specifically directed toward communities with children at high risk of under-immunization."

11. The correct answer is **D**. The passage states that the goal of TCP is to establish media conditions that support the reduction of tobacco use and associated disease, disability, and mortality.

12. The correct answer is **D**. The passage provides two clues that it is a broad-based public service program. First, it states that W.A.T.E.R. offers a wide variety of activities. Second, it states that W.A.T.E.R. strives to be on the cutting edge of public service.

13. The correct answer is **B**. The passage provides two clues to indicate that unclaimed items are sold to the public. First, it states that surplus property is "available for sale to the public." Second, it states that the surplus property includes unclaimed property.

14. The correct answer is **<u>A</u>**. The primary purpose of the passage is to explain the origins of the U.S. Civil Service system by describing the provisions of the Civil Service Act of 1883 and the circumstances under which the U.S. Civil Service system was created.

15. The correct answer is **<u>A</u>**. The passage provides several clues that imply that the Spoils System of employee selection was highly corrupted. To begin, the passage states that Civil Service Act was passed by Congress "in response to public outcry over the Spoils System." Further, the passage describes a component of the Act, (i.e., protections for employees from political coercion), which implies that political coercion occurred within the Spoils System.

Example of DCFS CDI training presentation materials

CDI Training Session
"Basic Overview"

Appendix S

CDI Training Session
“Back to Basics”

- Purpose of the CDI Program:

  - Provide up to 24 month internship to participate in on- the-job training leading to permanent employment with LA County DCFS or other department

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- Objectives of the CDI Program:

  - To master specific competencies in the areas of
    - Work Skills
    - Life Skills
    - Career Planning Skills
    - Personal Growth Goals

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- Components of the CDI Program
  - Worksite Training
  - Classroom Training
  - Self-Actualization

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- <u>Worksite Training</u>
  - Any location within DCFS
  - Will be assigned to a worksite supervisor
  - Must abide by the rules and operating procedures of the worksite

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- <u>Classroom Training</u>
  - Tuesdays
    - 1st and 3rd at the Pasadena Facility
    - 2nd and 4th at DCFS Headquarters
  - Must abide by the rules of the Trainer
    - Come on time and prepared
    - Be attentive
    - Actively participate

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- Content of Classroom Training
  - Pasadena Facility
    - Work Skills Development
    - Career Planning Skills Development
  - DCFS Headquarters
    - Career Planning Skills Development
    - Life Skills Development

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

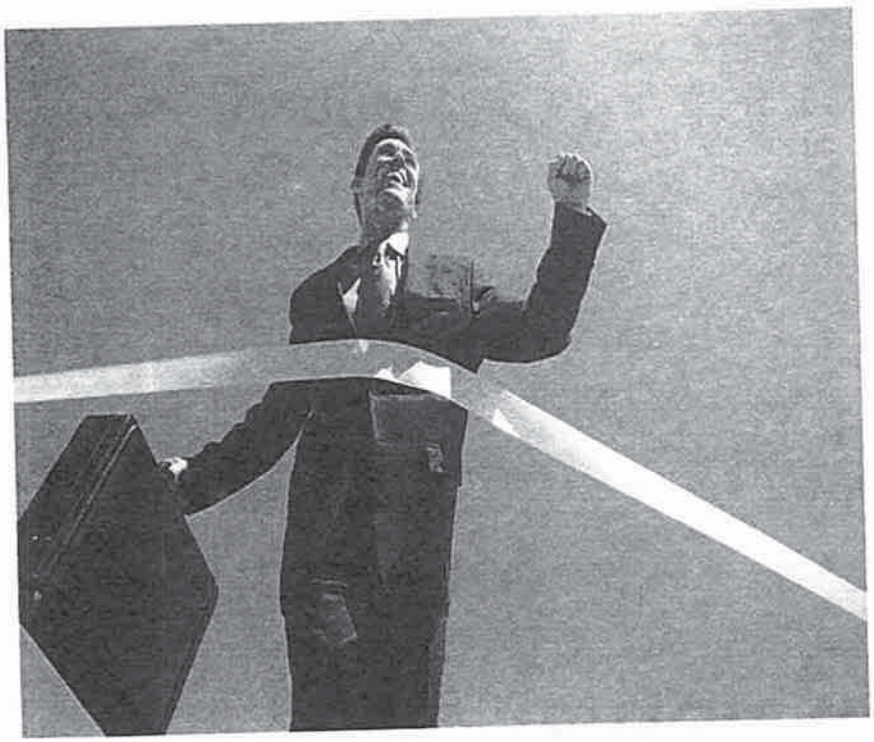
- Self-Actualization

  - Apply the principle of "Personal Responsibility" to attain goals
  - Work with a "Coach" to accomplish Personal Growth Goals

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- Performance Evaluation
  - Monthly
  - Annual
  - Training

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"



- Completion of the Internship
  - Mastery of Required Competencies
  - Achievement of Desired Outcomes
  - Exhaustion of Time Limits

CDI Training Session
“Back to Basics”

- Schedule for Today’s Session
  - PowerPoint Presentation and Discussion
    - 9:00 – 11:00
  - Work Skills Development
    - 11:00 – 11:30
  - Lunch
    - 11:30 – 12:30
  - Work Skills Development
    - 12:30 – 2:30
  - Career Planning Skills Development
    - 2:30 – 5:00

CDI Training Session
"Back to Basics"

- Questions???
  - About the CDI program
  - About the Work Site Training Component
  - About the Classroom Training Component
  - About the Self-Actualization Component
  - About Performance Evaluation
  - About Completion of the Internship

Example of DCFS CDI training presentation materials

Career Development Intern Program

Goal Setting

Appendix T

Goal Setting

- **What is a goal**:
  - -wants
  - -desires
  - -something to accomplish

Goal Setting

- **Must be:**

1. <u>S</u>pecific
2. <u>M</u>easurable
3. <u>A</u>chievable
4. <u>R</u>ealistic
5. <u>T</u>imeline

Types of Goals

- Social
- Professional
- Financial
- Educational
- Physical
- Family
- Personal Growth

Personal Growth Goals

- What is Self Actualization?

  - the desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for the individual to become actualized into his or her potential
  - the desire to become more and more of what one is to become and everything that one is capable of becoming
  - a desire, not a driving force, that could lead to realizing one's capabilities
  - a desire or motivation to achieve budding ambitions
  - the full realization of one's potential

Personal Growth Goals cont'd

- How do you measure it?

  (Here are some questions that can help?)

  -Are you doing what you like to do?
  -Do you like where your are?
  -Are you the best that you can be?
  -Are you satisfied being with those around you?
  -Are you happy with where you are in life?
  -Have you accomplished what you set out to accomplish?

Goal Setting Exercise

- Write at least 5 goals (see previous categories)
  - See handout

Goal Setting

- Comments
- Questions
- Follow up – 60 days

Example of DCFS CDI training presentation materials

CDI "Program Overview" for Coaches and Supervisors

Appendix U

CDI Program Overview

- Purpose of the CDI Program:
  - Provide up to 24 month internship to participate in on- the-job training leading to permanent employment with LA County DCFS or other department

CDI Program Overview

- Objectives of the CDI Program:
  - To master specific competencies in the areas of
    - Work Skills
    - Life Skills
    - Career Planning Skills
    - Personal Growth Goals

CDI Program Overview

- Components of the CDI Program
  - Worksite Training
  - Classroom Training
  - Self-Actualization

CDI Program Overview

- <u>Worksite Training</u>
  - Any location within DCFS
  - Will be assigned to a worksite supervisor
  - Must abide by the rules and operating procedures of the worksite

CDI Program Overview

- <u>Classroom Training</u>
  - Tuesdays
    - 1st and 3rd at the Norwalk Facility
  - Must abide by the rules of the Trainer
    - Come on time and prepared
    - Be attentive
    - Actively participate

CDI Program Overview

- Content of Classroom Training
  - Based on Training Competencies

CDI Program Overview

- **Self-Actualization**
  - Apply the principle of "Personal Responsibility" to attain goals
  - Work with a "Coach" to accomplish Personal Growth Goals

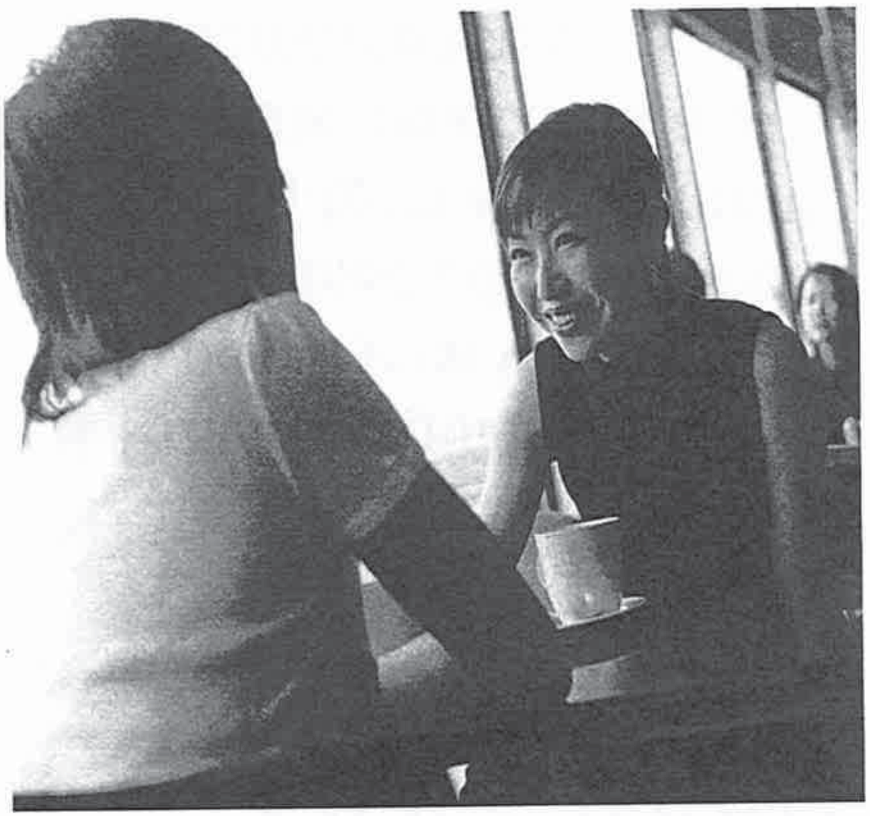
CDI Program Overview

- Coaches are volunteers from within DCFS ranks who provide
  - knowledge,
  - tips,
  - employment advice and
  - encouragement.

CDI Program Overview

Coaching activities include the following:

CDI Program Overview



- Meeting face-to-face or speaking by telephone on a weekly basis to discuss
  - job performance
  - Interests
  - Abilities
  - challenges
  - needs.

CDI Program Overview

Providing guidance and assistance with established short and long-term employment goals, objectives and competencies.

CDI Program Overview

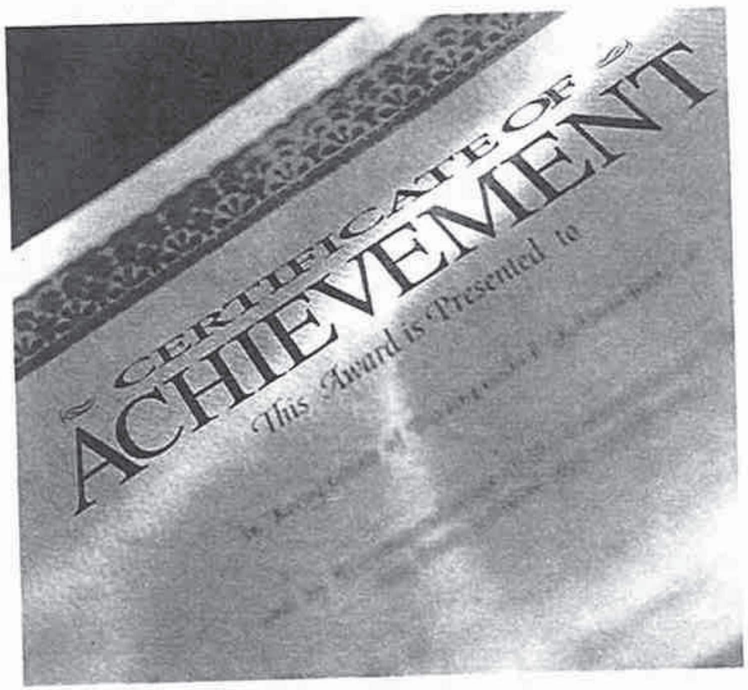
- Advising on appropriate work place behavior, and counseling on how to navigate the Department's culture.

- Coaches work closely with the supervisors and coordinators of the program.

CDI Program Overview

- Monthly conferencing face-to-face or by telephone with the Program Manager to discuss CDI progress, challenges and successes.

CDI Program Overview



- Assisting CDIs with mastery of Personal Growth Goals that lead to '"self-actualization."

CDI Program Overview

- Providing a confidential and 'safe space' to talk and share experiences that relate to and could impact job performance.

CDI Program Overview

- Suggestions from CDIs for Desirable Characteristics of Coaches
- Former Foster Youth Status
- Similar Personal Characteristics/Life Status
- Availability
- Ability to tactfully/sensitively inform others when they are wrong
- Trustworthiness
- Good Sense of Humor
- Good Example
- Confidentiality

CDI Program Overview

- Other important considerations:
  - The Coach does not have to hold a particular position or job-title.
  - The Coach does not have to work in the same office as the CDI.
  - CDIs should have a say in selecting their own coaches.

CDI Program Overview

- What a coach is not…
- A Supervisor - The Coach may consult with the supervisor and reinforce supervisory expectations, but the Coach will not serve as the supervisor
- A Surrogate Parent – CDIs are young adults, not children. They may need sound advice but Coaches should not parent these employees.

CDI Program Overview

- What a Coach is not, cont'd.

- A Defender – CDIs are encouraged to practice personal responsibility and to accept accountability for their actions. Coaches must encourage them to do the right thing not justify or dismiss failure to do this.

- A Bank Account –Coaches should not loan or give money to CDIs. They should give the CDIs advice about managing their own finances.

CDI Program Overview

- What a Coach is not, contd.

  - A Part-Time Participant – Coaches should be willing to provide support and guidance to CDIs for the entire 24 month internship and possibly beyond, into their first 6 months of County employment after completion of the internship.

CDI Program Overview

- The Role of the Supervisor
  - Provide day-to-day oversight
    - Assign duties/tasks
    - Give detailed instructions/directions regarding the completion of tasks
    - Provide constructive feedback/criticism regarding completion of assignments

CDI Program Overview

- The Role of the Supervisor, cont'd.
- Reinforce work skill competencies
  - Ensure opportunities to apply competencies
  - Allow opportunity to practice office skills

CDI Program Overview

- The Role of the Supervisor, cont'd.

- Model/Instruct on basic work place expectations, such as

    - A General work ethic
    - The importance of regular attendance/timeliness
    - Appropriate business attire
    - Interpersonal relationships in the workplace

CDI Program Overview

- Performance Evaluation
  - Monthly
  - Annual
  - Training

CDI Program Overview

- Completion of the Internship
  - Mastery of Required Competencies
  - Achievement of Desired Outcomes
  - Exhaustion of Time Limits

CDI Program Overview

- Questions???

Example of DCFS CDI training presentation materials

Objective of Training

- Identify a path for success for employees
- Discuss obstacles that prevent a potential "problem" employee from becoming a "good" employee
- Have a discussion on Balance and how to maintain Balance
- Identify ways to maintain your stress level

Appendix V

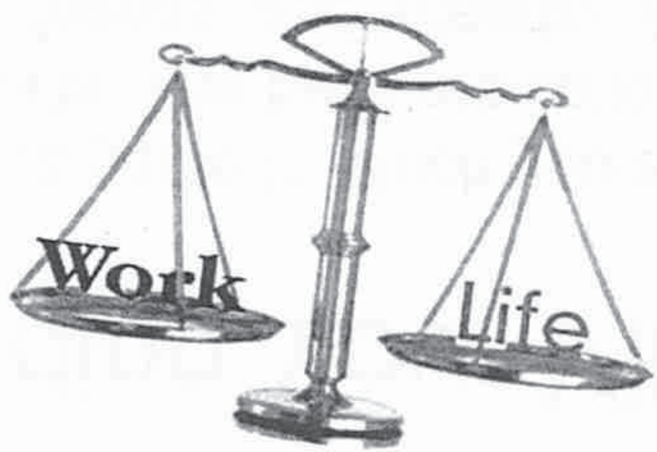
Building Your Village

- A good employee isn't someone who just comes to work everyday and does there work.
  - There is always something behind those that can be productive and stay productive; This is called:

This person has learned how to balance their personal and work life no matter what occurrence: Let's take a look at the definition of Work- Life Balance…

Building Your Village

- Work- Life Balance
  - The amount of time you spend doing your job compared with the amount of time you spend with your family and doing things you enjoy



Building Your Village

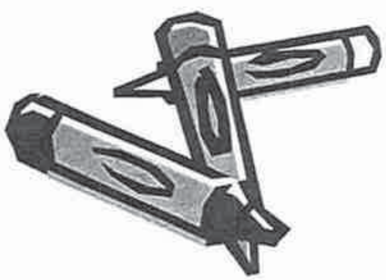
Imagine life is a game in which you are juggling five balls. The balls are called work, family, health, friends, and integrity. And you're keeping all of them in the air. But one day you finally come to understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls- family, health, friends, integrity- are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, nicked, perhaps even shattered. And once you truly understand the lesson of the five balls, you will have the beginnings of balance in your life.

Building Your Village

- Areas where balance/attention is needed
  - Financial Considerations
  - Family Considerations
  - Social Considerations
  - Educational Considerations
  - Personal Considerations
  - Integrity

Building Your Village

- With each area where balance and attention is needed, there also needs to be supporters or resources that have your back. You should be able to utilize your village to get where you need to go!!!
- Let's take a look at some of the things you need to consider when trying to "Build Your Village"...



Building Your Village

- Plans/ Preparation
  - Who can help you?
  - How do you know this person?
  - Is this person dependable?
  - How often do you communicate with this person?
  - Is this person fully aware of your goals/needs?
  - Is this person willing to help you?
  - Is this person able to help?
  - Who do you help?

Building Your Village

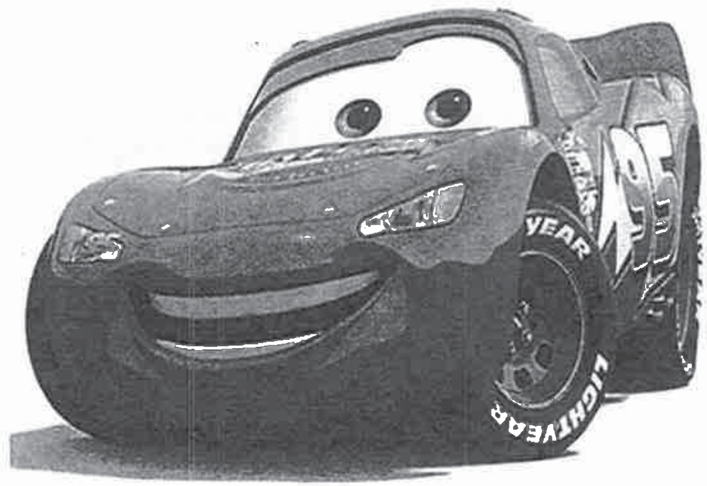
- Each consideration needs decisive timing and considerate preparation.
- Let's take a look at each aspect and unforeseen contingencies that can take place with up- keeping your balance.

Building Your Village

- **Financial Contingencies: Things that can effect your budget**
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Child Care
  - Personal care
  - Entertainment
  - Food/Groceries
  - Credit counseling/EAP/pay bills on time
  - Identity theft

Building Your Village

- Transportation
  - Cars
    - Buying vs. Car Loans
    - Insurance
    - Registration
    - Tickets
    - Maintenance
    - Repairs

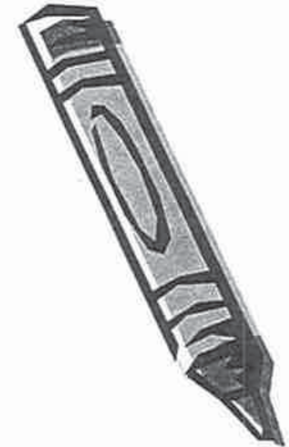


- Ridesharing
  - pertaining to sharing rides or transportation, especially among commuters
    - Personal cars vs. Rental cars/ Vanpooling
    - Gas money
    - Rental Fees
    - Reliability

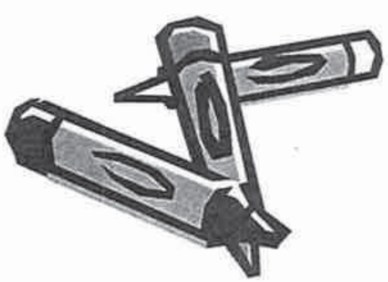
Building Your Village

- **Public Transportation**
  - Bus vs. Train
    - Bus scheduling
    - Monthly pass vs. money
  - **LA County Commuter Benefit Plan**

Building Your Village



- Resources/Supports
  - LA County RideShare
  - Commuting
  - LA County Commuter Benefit Plan
- What is your Plan/ Supports?
  - Refer back to Resources/ Supports



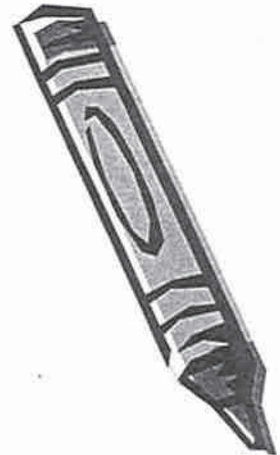
Building Your Village

- Housing
  - Renting vs. homeownership
    - Security deposit
    - Bank loans
    - First time home buyers program
    - Fixed rate vs. Balloon rate vs. Adjustable rate
    - Interest, property taxes
    - Credit worthiness
  - Stay at home with parents vs. Room mating
    - Having to trust another out of your comfort zone.
    - Sharing responsibilities and up-keeping them.
    - Have to watch the company (confliction)

Building Your Village

- Evictions
  - Stay on your credit for 7 + years.
  - Looking for housing with Evictions can be tricky
- Some tips:
  - Try looking before the eviction has actually been updated to your credit report.
  - Try private owners/small complexes vs. property management
  - Try Craigslist with keyword "No Credit Check"
    - Beware of Fraud and gimmicks

Building Your Village



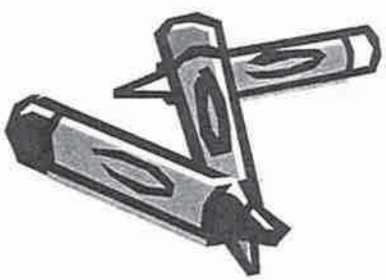
Resources/ Support

- Programs
  - THP, THP Plus
    - http://www.ilponline.org/
  - Section 8
    - http://hacla.org/
  - Low- income
    - http://www.publichousing.com/state/california
  - Subsidized Housing
    - http://housing.lacounty.gov/

Keep in mind these programs are money-savers but with little or no privacy and limited guest visits.

Building Your Village

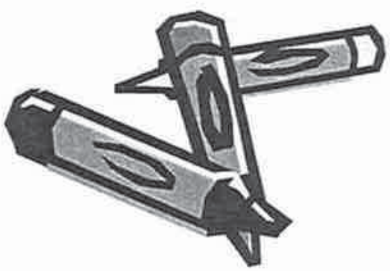
- Child Care
  - Whose your primary
  - Whose your back-up
  - What do you do in the case of your child being sick?



Building Your Village

- Resources/ Supports

  - What is your plan?



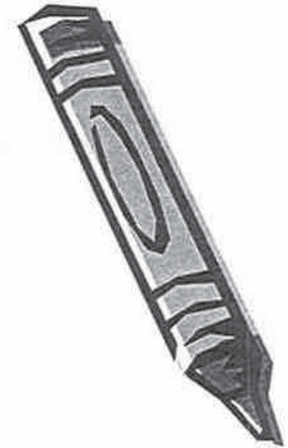
Building Your Village

- Personal Care
  - Birth Control
    - Abstinence 100% protection against both pregnancy and STD's
    - Condoms
    - Day After pills
    - Mirena IUD
    - NuvaRing
    - Depo-Provera Shots
    - Patches
    - Pills
    - Sterilization/ Hysterectomy

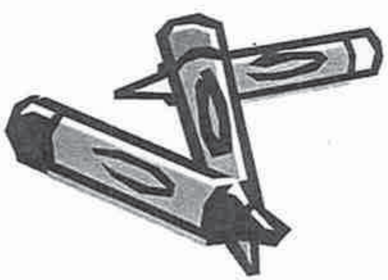
Building Your Village

- **Personal Care**
  - Weight
  - Grooming
  - Hygiene
  - Medical Benefits
    - Eyes
    - ears
    - Teeth
  - Adornment
    - The act of adorning. 2. Something that beautifies or adorns; an ornament

Building Your Village



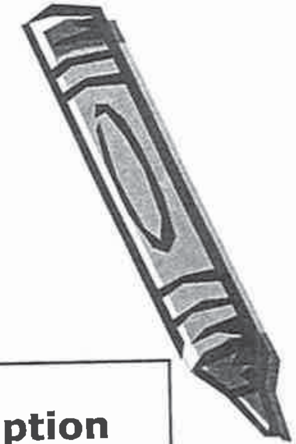
- Entertainment
  - Social Events
  - Concerts
  - Theme Parks
  - Stress Relief
- Food Groceries
  - WIC
  - Food Banks



Building our Village

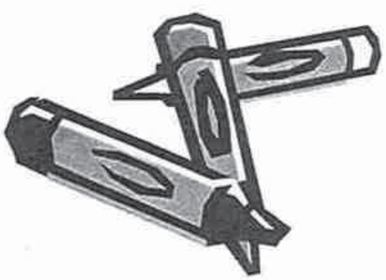
- **Credit Scores**
  - A **credit score** is a numerical expression based on a statistical analysis of a person's credit files, to represent the creditworthiness of that person. A credit score is primarily based on credit report information typically sourced from credit bureaus.
  - Lenders, such as banks and credit card companies, use credit scores to evaluate the potential risk posed by lending money to consumers and to mitigate losses due to bad debt. Lenders use credit scores to determine who qualifies for a loan, at what interest rate, and what credit limits. Lenders also use credit scores to determine which customers are likely to bring in the most revenue. The use of credit or identity scoring prior to authorizing access or granting credit is an implementation of a trusted system.
  - Credit scoring is not limited to banks. Other organizations, such as mobile phone companies, insurance companies, landlords, and government departments employ the same techniques. Credit scoring also has a lot of overlap with data mining, which uses many similar techniques.
  - FICO is a publicly-traded corporation (under the ticker symbol FICO) that created the best-known and most widely used credit score model in the United States.

Building Your Village



- **Credit Counseling**
  - Debt minimize
  - Prioritize
  - Highest Interest Rate "Pay more"
  - Credit Unions
  - EAP
    - Pay bills on time
  - Credit is your "cash" these days
    - Take good care of it
  - Identity theft

Credit Score	Description
730 - 850	Excellent
700 - 729	Great
670 - 699	Good
585 - 669	Average
300 - 584	Poor



Building Your Village

What makes up a FICO credit score?

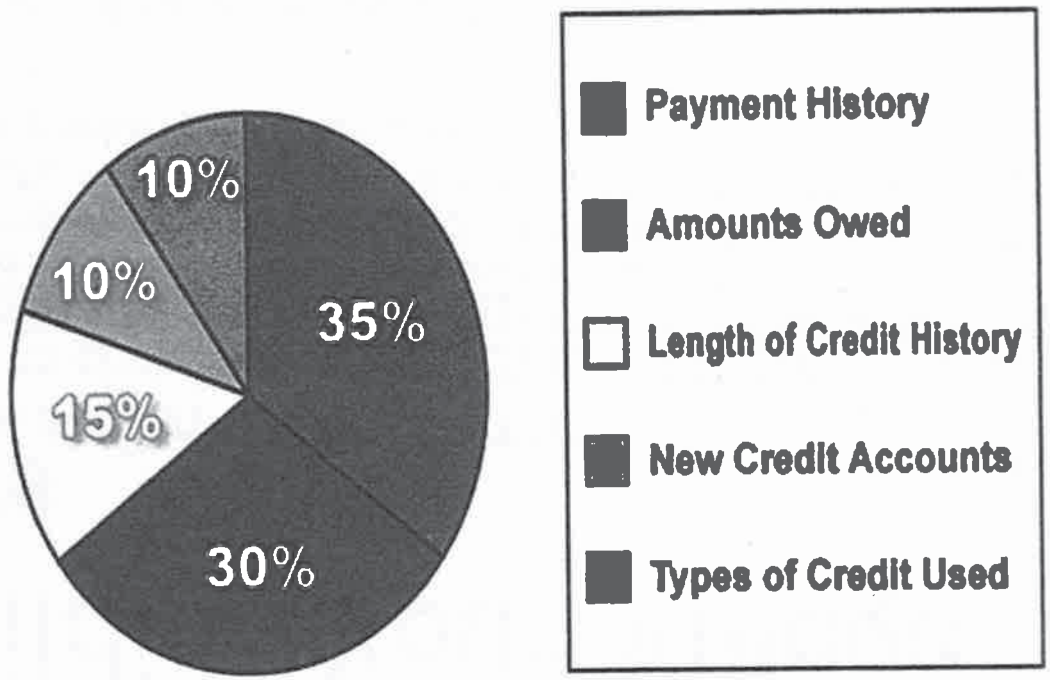
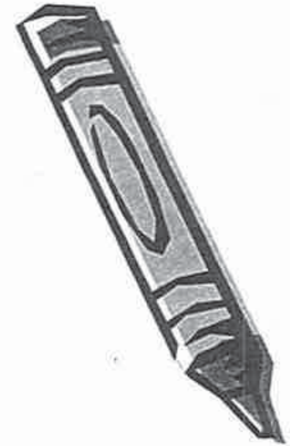
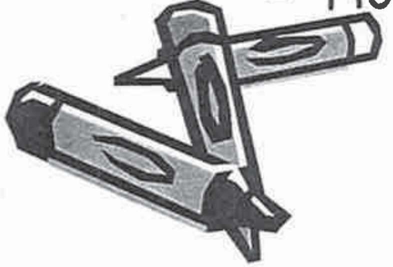


Image Source: Home Buying Institute, www.HomeBuyingInstitute.com



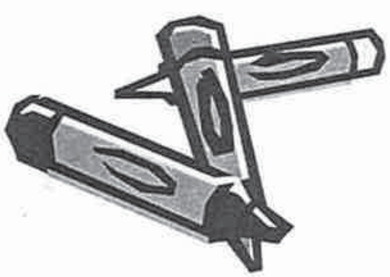
Building Your Village

- **Banking**
  - Checking (In the Chexsystem)
    - is an eFunds check verification service and consumer credit reporting agency like Experian, Equifax and TransUnion. While most credit reporting agencies broker data about how a consumer handles credit relationships, ChexSystems provides data related to how a consumer has handled deposit accounts at banking institutions.
  - Saving
  - Pay Day Advances vs. Horizons Loans
    - Interest Rates
  - Loans vs. Horizons Loans
    - Interest Rates
  - Horizons Hardship Withdrawals



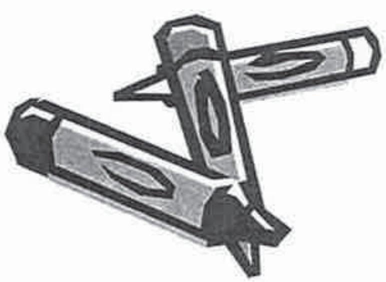
Building Your Village

- Family
  - Marriage
  - Kids
  - Travel
  - Holidays
  - Permanency for family members



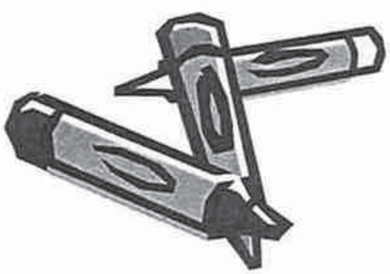
Building Your Village

- Resources/Supports
  - What is your plan?



Building Your Village

- Social
  - Entertainment
    - "Free"
  - Friends/Boundaries
  - "Pay it Forward"
    - Volunteer opportunities
  - Networking



Building Your Village

- Resources/Supports
  - What is your plan?

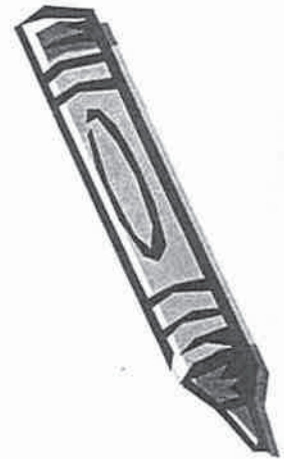
Building Your Village

- Educational
  - Education is the Key to your future – don't stop 'til you get enough. What is "enough"?
  - Full-time versus part time
  - Scholarships
  - Grants
  - Financial Aid
  - Funding

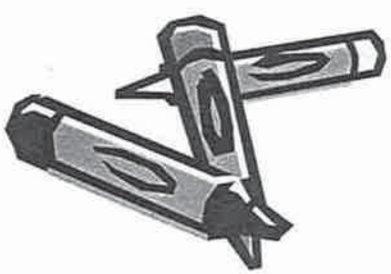
Building Your Village

- Resources/Supports
  - What is your plan?

Building Your Village

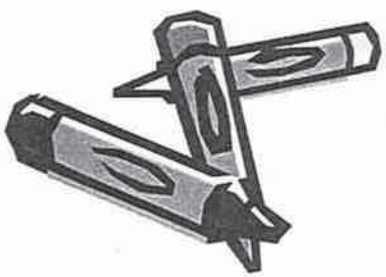


- Personal
  - Never be content
    - Strive for more
    - Sometimes out of your "comfort zone"
  - Illegal drugs
    - Can impair your judgment and decision making
  - Alcohol
    - Impacts health
    - Impairs Motor Skills



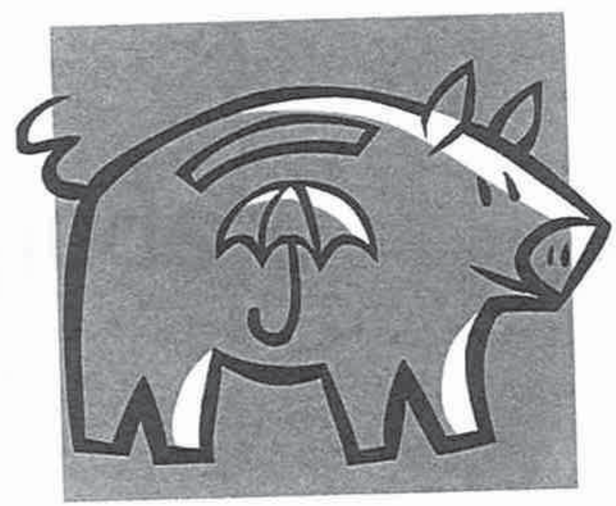
Building Your Village

- Personal
  - Negative influences
    - Peer pressure
    - Goals get "thrown" to the side
  - Health care
  - Maintenance
    - Knowing what is necessity over want.
  - Counseling
    - Everyone has "issues". Don't be afraid to seek help.
    - An ear to listen to.



Building Your Village

- Planning for contingencies – "Rainy day"
  - Unexpected expenses
  - Illness/accidents
    - Disability Insurance
    - FMLA
    - Medical/ Stress Leave
  - Other people



Building Your Village

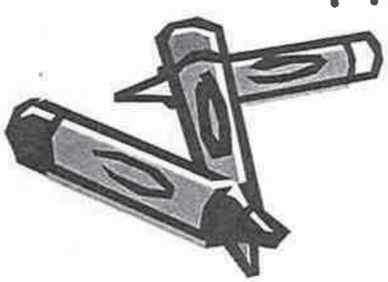
- Resources/Supports
  - What is your plan?

Building Your Village

- Unintended consequences
  - Can happen at anytime
  - When a solid support system is in tack you will see more of the Balance effect versus the Domino effect
  - Which leads to the next questions

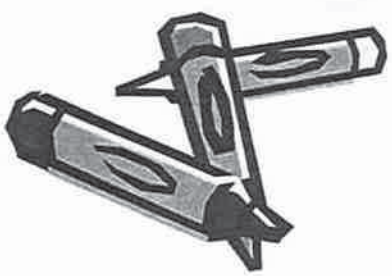
Building Your Village

- How can the village help?
  - Who is in your village?
  - What does each person bring?
  - How do you ask?



Building Your Village

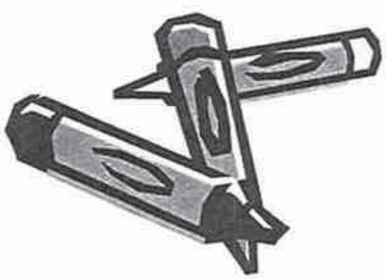
- Integrity
  - Are you "balanced"?
  - If not, what do you need to get a handle on? (Prioritize)
  - Realistic approach



Building Your Village

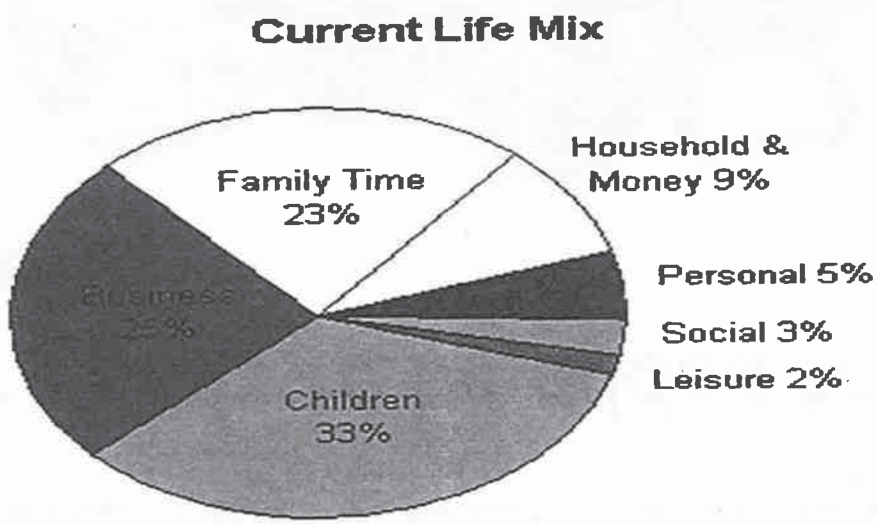
– How do you stay on course?

- Write the plan
- Review the plan
- Revise the plan
- Update the plan



Building Your Village

- What does your village look like?



What is wrong with this work-life balance chart? What is wrong with it if referring back to the excerpt?

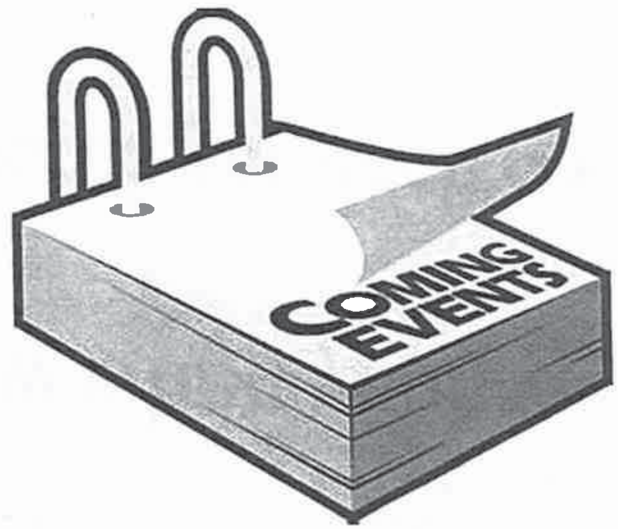
Building Your Village

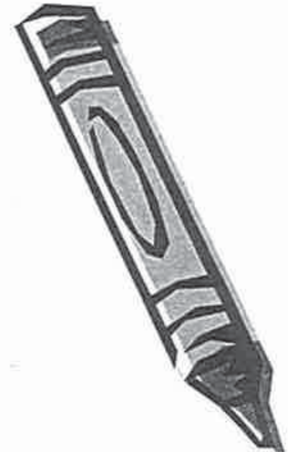
- What needs to be added to your village?

Building Your Village

- Timeframe for achieving work life balance

  - 1 month tasks
  - 3 month tasks
  - 6 month tasks
  - 9 month tasks
  - 12 month tasks





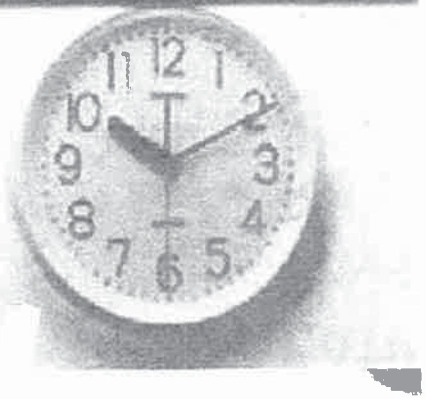
Building Your Village

- How will you know when your village is built?
  - Benchmarks/Awards for each area and each component

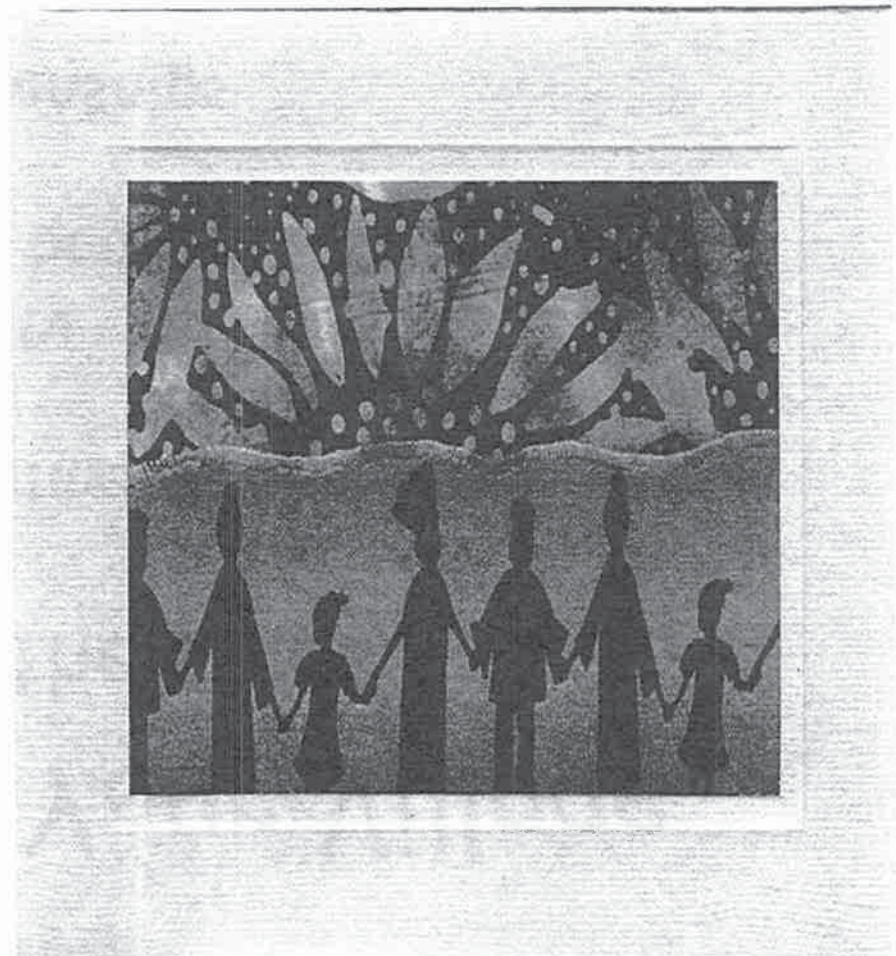
"I'd like to work flexible hours to avoid my children."

Building Your Village

- Dealing with the stress
  - Fun
  - Attitude adjustments
  - Eating Healthy
  - Physical Activity
  - Relax… mind & body
  - Sleep
  - Healthy Relationships
  - Spirituality

Building Your Village



Who's in my Village? How can they help me?

Family?

Friends?

Teachers?

Counselors?

Role models?

Co-workers?

Mentors?

VI GOAL SETTING

Name ______________________________

Description of the
Goal: ______________________________

____

____

____

____

____

Steps to be taken to accomplish the Goal:

Step 1 ______________________________

Step 2 ______________________________

Step 3 ______________________________

Step 4 ______________________________

Step 5 ______________________________

Who Can Help Me Reach This Goal?

Person's Name: ______________________________
Person's Name: ______________________________

Apartment Hunting Assignment

ASSIGNMENT:

Assume that you are an apartment hunter. Develop a plan for securing an apartment that is right for you. Use the internet to complete this assignment. Determine

1) the type/set up of the apartment that you need
2) three areas where you may want to live
3) locate possible apartment options in these areas (3 in each area)
4) determine what resources/information you would need to be able to move in
5) Investigate moving companies
6) Research preparing the inside of the apartment (carpet cleaning, general cleaning, paint costs, etc)
7) Investigate completely furnishing the apartment. Obtain the costs for all new furniture.

Note: You may include any other information that you think will enhance the assignment.

Prepare a PowerPoint presentation using all of the information that you have identified.

Be sure to use proper grammar and correct spelling. If you use statistics, you must cite the source of your information. Include pictures and graphics.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
HEADQUARTERS
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BRANCH OFFICE
3333 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90010
(213) 738-2211 FAX (213) 637-0820

LISA M. GARRETT
DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

September 18, 2014

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

S. Atkin for
From: Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel

Subject: **CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERN PROGRAM (STATUS UPDATE)**

On January 7, 2014, on motion by Supervisors Antonovich and Molina, your Board directed all Department Heads to identify and fill at least one budgeted, vacant position that may be practicably filled with a Career Development Intern by the end of the 2013-14 Fiscal Year (FY). Further, the Director of Personnel, in consultation with the Director of Children and Family Services, was directed to produce and distribute guidelines for departments to use in order to orient and train incoming Career Development Interns who are entering the workplace, and report back within 120 days. This correspondence serves to provide a second update concerning the Countywide hiring of Career Development Interns.

Background

Over the past 20 years, your Board has identified the development of career opportunities for transition-age youth exiting the County foster care system as a critical issue. One program designed to address this issue is the Career Development Intern Program. The program provides structured on-the-job training and employment for transition-age youth, and affords them the opportunity and skills necessary to successfully move to full-time employment with the County of Los Angeles in a variety of entry-level positions.

Hiring of Career Development Interns

In order to comply with your Board's motion and place qualified Career Development Interns during FY 2013-14, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) worked closely with all County departments.

The Department of Children and Family Services and the Internal Services Department both have well-established hiring programs for foster youth, were already in compliance with the motion, and therefore exempt. Additionally, both the Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum were exempted because these departments have limited entry-level positions. Finally, because the Chief Information Office had no entry-level positions, the Chief Executive Office granted them a leave for FY 2013-14 and approved the department's budget request to hire an intern for FY 2014-15.

DHR provided guidance and workshops to assist the candidates in preparing for selection interviews. A total of four interview workshops were held during April and May 2014. DHR also organized two interview sessions, on April 14, 2014 and June 2, 2014, wherein the Career Development Intern candidates and departmental hiring managers met and on-the-spot selection interviews were conducted.

DHR continues to run four open competitive examinations to recruit Career Development Interns in the following classifications:

- Office Support/Clerical
- Information Technology/Technical Support
- Craft Support
- Heavy Maintenance and Operational Support

Of the 31 non-exempt departments which participated in the Career Development Initiative, 27 have hired at least one intern. The remaining four departments are in various stages of either interviewing or onboarding their selected candidates. As of September 18, 2014, a total of 36 intern candidates have accepted job offers and/or have begun their assignments. Please see the attached Hiring Status Table.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 974-2406 or your staff may contact Carla D. Williams, Senior Human Resources Manager, at (213) 893-7810 or cawilliams@hr.lacounty.gov.

LMG:SA:CDW
AG:IBM:lh

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer
Each Department Head

Career Development Intern (CDI) – Hiring Status as of September 18, 2014

	Department	CDIs Hired	CDIs in Hiring Process	Comments
1	Agricultural Commission / Weights & Measures	1		
2	Alternate Public Defender	1		
3	Animal Care & Control	1		
4	Assessor	1		
5	Auditor-Controller	1		
6	Beaches & Harbors	1		
7	Board of Supervisors	1		
8	Chief Executive Office	1		
9	Chief Information Office			2 candidates scheduled for interviews
10	Child Support Services	1		
11	Community & Senior Services	1		
12	Consumer Affairs	1		
13	Coroner / Medical Examiner	1		
14	County Counsel	1		
15	District Attorney	2		
16	Fire	1		
17	Health Services	1		
18	Human Resources	1		
19	Mental Health	1		
20	Military and Veteran Affairs	1		
21	Parks & Recreation	1		
22	Probation	1	1	1 candidate in background
23	Public Defender		1	1 candidate pending medical clearance
24	Public Health	1		
25	Public Library	1		
26	Public Social Services	4		
27	Public Works	1		
28	Regional Planning	1		
29	Registrar Recorder / County Clerk	1		
30	Sheriff		2	2 candidates in background
31	Treasurer – Tax Collector		1	1 candidate pending Live Scan results
	Children & Family Services			Exempt – existing CDI program
	Internal Services			Exempt – existing CDI program
	Museum of Art			Exempt
	Natural History Museum			Exempt
	Total CDIs Hired	31	5	

DHR

Department of Human Resources
County of Los Angeles